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The Works of Tobias Smollett

Tobias George Smollett

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THE WORKS OF

TOBIAS SMOLLETT

IN TWELVE VOLUMES

LIMITED EDITION

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SIR STENTOR AND FERDINAND PLAY AT HAZARD

"Now for the main, Count,—odd! here they come—here are the seven black stars, i'faith. Come along, my yellow boys—odd's heart! I never liked the face of Lewis before"

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THE WORKS OF TOBIAS SMOLLETT

VOLUME EIGHT

THE ADVENTURES OF COUNT FATHOM

COMPLETE IN TWO PARTS

PART I.

WITH THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE, AND AN INTRODUCTION BY

G. H. MAYNADIER, PH.D.

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, HARVARD UNIVERSITY

NEW YORK

GEORGE D. SPROUL

MCMII

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INTRODUCTION

THE Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom, Smollett's third novel, was given to the world in 1753. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, writing to her daughter, the Countess of Bute, over a year later,[1] remarked that "my friend Smollett . . . has certainly a talent for invention, though I think it flags a little in his last work." Lady Mary was both right and wrong. The inventive power which we commonly think of as Smollett's was the ability to work over his own experience into realistic fiction. Of this, *Ferdinand Count Fathom* shows comparatively little. It shows relatively little, too, of Smollett's vigorous personality, which in his earlier works was present to give life and interest to almost every chapter, were it to describe a street brawl, a ludicrous situation, a whimsical character, or with venomous prejudice to gibbet some enemy. This individuality — the peculiar spirit of the author which can be felt rather than described — is present in the dedication of *Fathom* to Doctor ——., who is no other than Smollett himself, and a candid revelation of his character, by the way, this dedication contains. It is present, too, in the opening chapters,

[1] January 1st, 1755.

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which show, likewise, in the picture of Fathom's mother, something of the author's peculiar "talent for invention." Subsequently, however, there is no denying that the Smollett invention and the Smollett spirit both flag. And yet, in a way, *Fathom* displays more invention than any of the author's novels; it is based far less than any other on personal experience. Unfortunately such thorough-going invention was not suited to Smollett's genius. The result is, that while uninteresting as a novel of contemporary manners, *Fathom* has an interest of its own in that it reveals a new side of its author. We think of Smollett, generally, as a rambling story-teller, a rational, unromantic man of the world, who fills his pages with his own oddly-metamorphosed acquaintances and experiences. The Smollett of *Count Fathom*, on the contrary, is rather a forerunner of the romantic school, who has created a tolerably organic tale of adventure out of his own brain. Though this is notably less readable than the author's earlier works, still the wonder is that when the man is so far "off his beat," he should yet know so well how to meet the strange conditions which confront him. To one whose idea of Smollett's genius is formed entirely by *Random* and *Pickle* and *Humphry Clinker*, *Ferdinand Count Fathom* will offer many surprises.

The first of these is the comparative lifelessness of the book. True, here again are action and incident galore, but generally unaccompanied by that rough Georgian hurly-burly, common in Smollett, which is so interesting to contemplate from a com-

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fortable distance, and which goes so far towards making his fiction seem real. Nor are the characters, for the most part, life-like enough to be interesting. There is an apparent exception, to be sure, in the hero's mother, already mentioned, the hardened camp-follower, whom we confidently expect to become vitalised after the savage fashion of Smollett's characters. But, alas! we have no chance to learn the lady's style of conversation, for the few words that come from her lips are but partially characteristic; we have only too little chance to learn her manners and customs. In the fourth chapter, while she is making sure with her dagger that all those on the field of battle whom she wishes to rifle are really dead, an officer of the hussars, who has been watching her lucrative progress, unfeelingly puts a brace of bullets into the lady's brain, just as she raises her hand to smite him to the heart. Perhaps it is as well that she is thus removed before our disappointment at the non-fulfilment of her promise becomes poignant. So far as we may judge from the other personages of *Count Fathom*, even this interesting Amazon would sooner or later have turned into a wooden figure, with a label giving the necessary information as to her character.

Such certainly is her son, Fathom, the hero of the book. Because he is placarded, "Shrewd villain of monstrous inhumanity," we are fain to accept him for what his creator intended; but seldom in word or deed is he a convincingly real villain. His friend and foil, the noble young Count de Melvil, is no more alive than he; and equally wooden are Joshua,

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the high-minded, saint-like Jew, and that tedious, foolish Don Diego. Neither is the heroine alive, the peerless Monimia, but then, in her case, want of vitality is not surprising; the presence of it would amaze us. If she were a woman throbbing with life, she would be different from Smollett's other heroines. The "second lady" of the melodrama, Mademoiselle de Melvil, though by no means vivified, is yet more real than her sister-in-law.

The fact that they are mostly inanimate figures is not the only surprise given us by the personages of *Count Fathom*. It is a surprise to find few of them strikingly whimsical; it is a surprise to find them in some cases far more distinctly conceived than any of the people in *Roderick Random* or *Peregrine Pickle*. In the second of these, we saw Smollett beginning to understand the use of incident to indicate consistent development of character. In *Count Fathom*, he seems fully to understand this principle of art, though he has not learned to apply it successfully. And so, in spite of an excellent conception, Fathom, as I have said, is unreal. After all his villainies, which he perpetrates without any apparent qualms of conscience, it is incredible that he should honestly repent of his crimes. We are much inclined to doubt when we read that "his vice and ambition was now quite mortified within him," the subsequent testimony of Matthew Bramble, Esq., in *Humphry Clinker*, to the contrary, notwithstanding. Yet Fathom up to this point is consistently drawn, and drawn for a purpose: — to show that cold-blooded roguery, though successful for a while, will come to

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grief in the end. To heighten the effect of his scoundrel, Smollett develops parallel with him the virtuous Count de Melvil. The author's scheme of thus using one character as the foil of another, though not conspicuous for its originality, shows a decided advance in the theory of constructive technique. Only, as I have said, Smollett's execution is now defective.

"But," one will naturally ask, "if *Fathom* lacks the amusing, and not infrequently stimulating, hurly-burly of Smollett's former novels; if its characters, though well-conceived, are seldom divertingly fantastic and never thoroughly animate; what makes the book interesting?" The surprise will be greater than ever when the answer is given that, to a large extent, the plot makes *Fathom* interesting. Yes, Smollett, hitherto indifferent to structure, has here written a story in which the plot itself, often clumsy though it may be, engages a reader's attention. One actually wants to know whether the young Count is ever going to receive consolation for his sorrows and inflict justice on his basely ungrateful pensioner. And when, finally, all turns out as it should, one is amazed to find how many of the people in the book have helped towards the designed conclusion. Not all of them, indeed, nor all of the adventures, are indispensable, but it is manifest at the end that much, which, for the time, most readers think irrelevant — such as Don Diego's history — is, after all, essential.

It has already been said that in *Count Fathom* Smollett appears to some extent as a romanticist,

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and this is another fact which lends interest to the book. That he had a powerful imagination is not a surprise. Any one versed in Smollett has already seen it in the remarkable situations which he has put before us in his earlier works. These do not indicate, however, that Smollett possessed the imagination which could excite romantic interest; for in *Roderick Random* and in *Peregrine Pickle*, the wonderful situations serve chiefly to amuse. In *Fathom*, however, there are some designed to excite horror; and one, at least, is eminently successful. The hero's night in the wood between Bar-le-duc and Chalons was no doubt more blood-curdling to our eighteenth-century ancestors than it is to us, who have become acquainted with scores of similar situations in the small number of exciting romances which belong to literature, and in the greater number which do not. Still, even to-day, a reader, with his taste jaded by trashy novels, will be conscious of Smollett's power, and of several thrills, likewise, as he reads about Fathom's experience in the loft in which the beldame locks him to pass the night.

This situation is melodramatic rather than romantic, as the word is used technically in application to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature. There is no little in *Fathom*, however, which is genuinely romantic in the latter sense. Such is the imprisonment of the Countess in the castle-tower, whence she waves her handkerchief to the young Count, her son and would-be rescuer. And especially so is the scene in the church, when Renaldo (the very name is romantic) visits at midnight the supposed grave of his lady-

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love. While he was waiting for the sexton to open the door, his "soul . . . was wound up to the highest pitch of enthusiastic sorrow. The uncommon darkness, . . . the solemn silence, and lonely situation of the place, conspired with the occasion of his coming, and the dismal images of his fancy, to produce a real rapture of gloomy expectation, which the whole world not have persuaded him to disappoint. The clock struck twelve, the owl screeched from the ruined battlement, the door was opened by the sexton, who, by the light of a glimmering taper, conducted the despairing lover to a dreary aisle, and stamped upon the ground with his foot, saying, 'Here the young lady lies interred.'"

We have here such an amount of the usual romantic machinery of the "grave-yard" school of poets — that school of which Professor W. L. Phelps calls Young, in his *Night Thoughts*, the most "conspicuous exemplar" — that one is at first inclined to think Smollett poking fun at it. The context, however, seems to prove that he was perfectly serious. It is interesting, then, as well as surprising, to find traces of the romantic spirit in his fiction over ten years before Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*. It is also interesting to find so much melodramatic feeling in him, because it makes stronger the connection between him and his nineteenth-century disciple, Dickens.

From all that I have said, it must not be thought that the usual Smollett is always, or almost always, absent from *Count Fathom*. I have spoken of the dedication and of the opening chapters as what

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we might expect from his pen. There are, besides, true Smollett strokes in the scenes in the prison from which Melvil rescues Fathom, and there is a good deal of the satirical Smollett fun in the description of Fathom's ups and downs, first as the petted beau, and then as the fashionable doctor. In chronicling the latter meteoric career, Smollett had already observed the peculiarity of his countrymen which Thackeray was fond of harping on in the next century — "the maxim which universally prevails among the English people . . . to overlook, . . . on their return to the metropolis, all the connexions they may have chanced to acquire during their residence at any of the medical wells. And this social disposition is so scrupulously maintained, that two persons who live in the most intimate correspondence at Bath or Tunbridge, shall, in four-and-twenty hours . . . meet in St. James's Park, without betraying the least token of recognition. . . ." And good, too, is the way in which, as Dr. Fathom goes rapidly down the social hill, he makes excuses for his declining splendour. His chariot was overturned "with a hideous crash" at such danger to himself, "that he did not believe he should ever hazard himself again in any sort of wheel carriage." He turned off his men for maids, because "men servants are generally impudent, lazy, debauched, or dishonest." To avoid the din of the street, he shifted his lodgings into a quiet, obscure court. And so forth and so on, in the true Smollett vein.

But, after all, such of the old sparks are struck

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only occasionally. Apart from its plot, which not a few nineteenth-century writers of detective-stories might have improved, *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* is less interesting for itself than any other piece of fiction from Smollett's pen. For a student of Smollett, however, it is highly interesting as showing the author's romantic, melodramatic tendencies, and the growth of his constructive technique.

G. H. MAYNADIER.

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THE ADVENTURES *of* FERDINAND COUNT FATHOM

TO DOCTOR * * * * * *

You and I, my good friend, have often deliberated on the difficulty of writing such a dedication as might gratify the self-complacency of a patron, without exposing the author to the ridicule or censure of the public; and I think we generally agreed that the task was altogether impracticable. — Indeed, this was one of the few subjects on which we have always thought in the same manner. For, notwithstanding that deference and regard which we mutually pay to each other, certain it is, we have often differed, according to the predominancy of those different passions, which frequently warp the opinion, and perplex the understanding of the most judicious.

In dedication, as in poetry, there is no medium; for, if any one of the human virtues be omitted in the enumeration of the patron's good qualities, the whole address is construed into an affront, and the writer has the mortification to find his praise prostituted to very little purpose.

On the other hand, should he yield to the transports of gratitude or affection, which is always apt to exaggerate, and produce no more than the genuine effusions of his heart, the world will make no allowance for the warmth of his passion, but ascribe the praise he bestows to interested views and sordid adulation.

Sometimes too, dazzled by the tinsel of a character which he has no opportunity to investigate, he pours forth the homage of his admiration upon some false Mæcenas, whose future conduct gives the lie to his eulogium, and involves him in shame and confusion of face. Such was the fate of a late ingenious author,[1] who was so often put to the blush for the undeserved

[1] The Author of the "Seasons."

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incense he had offered in the heat of an enthusiastic disposition, misled by popular applause, that he had resolved to retract, in his last will, all the encomiums which he had thus prematurely bestowed, and stigmatise the unworthy by name — a laudable scheme of poetical justice, the execution of which was fatally prevented by untimely death.

Whatever may have been the fate of other dedicators, I, for my own part, sit down to write this address, without any apprehension of disgrace or disappointment; because I know you are too well convinced of my affection and sincerity to repine at what I shall say touching your character and conduct. And you will do me the justice to believe, that this public distinction is a testimony of my particular friendship and esteem.

Not that I am either insensible of your infirmities, or disposed to conceal them from the notice of mankind. There are certain foibles which can only be cured by shame and mortification; and whether or not yours be of that species, I shall have the comfort to think my best endeavours were used for your reformation.

Know then, I can despise your pride, while I honour your integrity, and applaud your taste, while I am shocked at your ostentation. — I have known you trifling, superficial, and obstinate in dispute; meanly jealous and awkwardly reserved; rash and haughty in your resentments; and coarse and lowly in your connexions. I have blushed at the weakness of your conversation, and trembled at the errors of your conduct — yet, as I own you possess certain good qualities, which overbalance these defects, and distinguish you on this occasion as a person for whom I have the most perfect attachment and esteem, you have no cause to complain of the indelicacy with which your faults are reprehended. And as they are chiefly the excesses of a sanguine disposition and looseness of thought, impatient of caution or control, you may, thus stimulated, watch over your own intemperance and infirmity with redoubled vigilance and consideration, and for the future profit by the severity of my reproof.

These, however, are not the only motives that induce me to trouble you with this public application. I must not only perform my duty to my friends, but also discharge the debt I owe to my own interest. We live in a censorious age; and an author cannot take too much precaution to anticipate the preju-

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dice, misapprehension, and temerity of malice, ignorance, and presumption.

I therefore think it incumbent upon me to give some previous intimation of the plan which I have executed in the subsequent performance, that I may not be condemned upon partial evidence; and to whom can I with more propriety appeal in my explanation than to you, who are so well acquainted with all the sentiments and emotions of my breast?

A novel is a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of an uniform plan, and general occurrence, to which every individual figure is subservient. But this plan cannot be executed with propriety, probability, or success, without a principal personage to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and at last close the scene, by virtue of his own importance.

Almost all the heroes of this kind, who have hitherto succeeded on the English stage, are characters of transcendent worth, conducted through the vicissitudes of fortune, to that goal of happiness, which ever ought to be the repose of extraordinary desert.—Yet the same principle by which we rejoice at the remuneration of merit, will teach us to relish the disgrace and discomfiture of vice, which is always an example of extensive use and influence, because it leaves a deep impression of terror upon the minds of those who were not confirmed in the pursuit of morality and virtue, and, while the balance wavers, enables the right scale to preponderate.

In the drama, which is a more limited field of invention, the chief personage is often the object of our detestation and abhorrence; and we are as well pleased to see the wicked schemes of a *Richard* blasted, and the perfidy of a *Mashwell* exposed, as to behold a *Bevil* happy, and an *Edward* victorious.

The impulses of fear, which is the most violent and interesting of all the passions, remain longer than any other upon the memory; and for one that is allured to virtue, by the contemplation of that peace and happiness which it bestows, a hundred are deterred from the practice of vice, by that infamy and punishment to which it is liable, from the laws and regulations of mankind.

Let me not, therefore, be condemned for having chosen my principal character from the purlieus of treachery and fraud,

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when I declare my purpose is to set him up as a beacon for the benefit of the unexperienced and unwary, who, from the perusal of these memoirs, may learn to avoid the manifold snares with which they are continually surrounded in the paths of life; while those who hesitate on the brink of iniquity may be terrified from plunging into that irremediable gulf, by surveying the deplorable fate of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*.

That the mind might not be fatigued, nor the imagination disgusted, by a succession of vicious objects, I have endeavoured to refresh the attention with occasional incidents of a different nature; and raised up a virtuous character, in opposition to the adventurer, with a view to amuse the fancy, engage the affection, and form a striking contrast which might heighten the expression, and give a *relief* to the moral of the whole.

If I have not succeeded in my endeavours to unfold the mysteries of fraud, to instruct the ignorant, and entertain the vacant; if I have failed in my attempts to subject folly to ridicule, and vice to indignation; to rouse the spirit of mirth, wake the soul of compassion, and touch the secret springs that move the heart; I have, at least, adorned virtue with honour and applause, branded iniquity with reproach and shame, and carefully avoided every hint or expression which could give umbrage to the most delicate reader — circumstances which (whatever may be my fate with the public) will with you always operate in favour of,

Dear sir, your very affectionate friend and servant,

THE AUTHOR.

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CHAPTER ONE

SOME SAGE OBSERVATIONS THAT NATURALLY INTRODUCE OUR IMPORTANT HISTORY.

CARDINAL DE RETZ very judiciously observes, that all historians must of necessity be subject to mistakes, in explaining the motives of those actions they record, unless they derive their intelligence from the candid confession of the person whose character they represent; and that, of consequence, every man of importance ought to write his own memoirs, provided he has honesty enough to tell the truth, without suppressing any circumstance that may tend to the information of the reader. This, however, is a requisite that, I am afraid, would be very rarely found among the number of those who exhibit their own portraits to the public. Indeed, I will venture to say, that, how upright soever a man's intentions may be, he will, in the performance of such a task, be sometimes misled by his own phantasy, and represent objects, as they appeared to him, through the mists of prejudice and passion.

An unconcerned reader, when he peruses the history of two competitors, who lived two thousand years ago, or who perhaps never had existence, except in the imagination of the author, cannot help interest-

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ing himself in the dispute, and espousing one side of the contest, with all the zeal of a warm adherent. What wonder, then, that we should be heated in our own concerns, review our actions with the same self-approbation that they had formerly acquired, and recommend them to the world with all the enthusiasm of paternal affection?

Supposing this to be the case, it was lucky for the cause of historical truth, that so many pens have been drawn by writers, who could not be suspected of such partiality; and that many great personages, among the ancients as well as moderns, either would not or could not entertain the public with their own memoirs. From this want of inclination or capacity to write, in our hero himself, the undertaking is now left to me, of transmitting to posterity the remarkable adventures of FERDINAND COUNT FATHOM; and by the time the reader shall have glanced over the subsequent sheets, I doubt not but he will bless God that the adventurer was not his own historian.

This mirror of modern chivalry was none of those who owe their dignity to the circumstances of their birth, and are consecrated from the cradle for the purposes of greatness, merely because they are the accidental children of wealth. He was heir to no visible patrimony, unless we reckon a robust constitution, a tolerable appearance, and an uncommon capacity, as the advantages of inheritance. If the comparison obtains in this point of consideration, he was as much as any man indebted to his parent; and pity it was, that, in the sequel of his fortune, he never had an opportunity of manifesting his filial

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gratitude and regard. From this agreeable act of duty to his sire, and all those tendernesses that are reciprocally enjoyed betwixt the father and the son, he was unhappily excluded by a small circumstance; at which, however, he was never heard to repine. In short, had he been brought forth in the fabulous ages of the world, the nature of his origin might have turned to his account; he might, like other heroes of antiquity, have laid claim to divine extraction, without running the risk of being claimed by an earthly father. Not that his parents had any reason to disown or renounce their offspring, or that there was anything preternatural in the circumstances of his generation and birth; on the contrary, he was, from the beginning, a child of promising parts, and in due course of nature ushered into the world amidst a whole cloud of witnesses. But, that he was acknowledged by no mortal sire, solely proceeded from the uncertainty of his mother, whose affections were so dissipated among a number of admirers, that she could never pitch upon the person from whose loins our hero sprung.

Over and above this important doubt under which he was begotten, other particularities attended his birth, and seemed to mark him out as something uncommon among the sons of men. He was brought forth in a waggon, and might be said to be literally a native of two different countries; for, though he first saw the light in Holland, he was not born till after the carriage arrived in Flanders; so that, all these extraordinary circumstances considered, the task of determining to what government he naturally owed

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allegiance, would be at least as difficult as that of ascertaining the so much contested birthplace of Homer.

Certain it is, the Count's mother was an Englishwoman, who, after having been five times a widow in one campaign, was, in the last year of the renowned Marlborough's command, numbered among the baggage of the allied army, which she still accompanied, through pure benevolence of spirit, supplying the ranks with the refreshing streams of choice Geneva, and accommodating individuals with clean linen, as the emergency of their occasions required. Nor was her philanthropy altogether confined to such ministration; she abounded with "the milk of human kindness," which flowed plentifully among her fellow-creatures; and to every son of Mars who cultivated her favour, she liberally dispensed her smiles, in order to sweeten the toils and dangers of the field.

And here it will not be amiss to anticipate the remarks of the reader, who, in the chastity and excellency of his conception, may possibly exclaim, "Good Heaven! will these authors never reform their imaginations, and lift their ideas from the obscene objects of low life? Must the public be again disgusted with the grovelling adventures of a waggon? Will no writer of genius draw his pen in the vindication of taste, and entertain us with the agreeable characters, the dignified conversation, the poignant repartee, in short, the genteel comedy of the polite world?"

Have a little patience, gentle, delicate, sublime critic; you, I doubt not, are one of those consummate connoisseurs, who, in their purifications, let humour

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evaporate, while they endeavour to preserve decorum, and polish wit, until the edge of it is quite worn off. Or, perhaps, of that class, who, in the sapience of taste, are disgusted with those very flavours in the productions of their own country which have yielded infinite delectation to their faculties, when imported from another clime; and d—n an author in despite of all precedent and prescription; — who extol the writings of Petronius Arbiter, read with rapture the amorous sallies of Ovid's pen, and chuckle over the story of Lucian's ass; yet, if a modern author presumes to relate the progress of a simple intrigue, are shocked at the indecency and immorality of the scene; — who delight in following Guzman d'Alfarache, through all the mazes of squalid beggary; who with pleasure accompany Don Quixote and his squire, in the lowest paths of fortune; who are diverted with the adventures of Scarron's ragged troop of strollers, and highly entertained with the servile situations of Gil Blas; yet, when a character in humble life occasionally occurs in a performance of our own growth, exclaim, with an air of disgust, "Was ever anything so mean! sure, this writer must have been very conversant with the lowest scenes of life"; — who, when Swift or Pope represents a coxcomb in the act of swearing, scruple not to laugh at the ridiculous execrations; but, in a less reputed author, condemn the use of such profane expletives; — who eagerly explore the jakes of Rabelais, for amusement, and even extract humour from the dean's description of a lady's dressing-room; yet in a production of these days, unstamped with such venerable names, will stop their noses, with all

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the signs of loathing and abhorrence, at a bare mention of the china chamber-pot;—who applauded Catullus, Juvenal, Persius, and Lucan, for their spirit in lashing the greatest names of antiquity; yet, when a British satirist, of this generation, has courage enough to call in question the talents of a pseudo-patron in power, accuse him of insolence, rancour, and scurrility.

If such you be, courteous reader, I say again, have a little patience; for your entertainment we are about to write. Our hero shall, with all convenient despatch, be gradually sublimed into those splendid connexions of which you are enamoured; and God forbid, that, in the meantime, the nature of his extraction should turn to his prejudice in a land of freedom like this, where individuals are every day ennobled in consequence of their own qualifications, without the least retrospective regard to the rank or merit of their ancestors. Yes, refined reader, we are hastening to that goal of perfection, where satire dares not show her face; where nature is castigated, almost even to still life; where humour turns changeling, and slavers in an insipid grin; where wit is volatilised into a mere vapour; where decency, divested of all substance, hovers about like a fantastic shadow; where the salt of genius, escaping, leaves nothing but pure and simple phlegm; and the inoffensive pen for ever drops the mild manna of soul-sweetening praise.

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CHAPTER TWO

A SUPERFICIAL VIEW OF OUR HERO'S INFANCY.

HAVING thus bespoken the indulgence of our guests, let us now produce the particulars of our entertainment, and speedily conduct our adventurer through the stage of infancy, which seldom teems with interesting incidents.

As the occupations of his mother would not conveniently permit her to suckle this her firstborn at her own breast, and those happy ages were now no more, in which the charge of nursing a child might be left to the next goat or she-wolf, she resolved to improve upon the ordinances of nature, and foster him with a juice much more energetic than the milk of goat, wolf, or woman; this was no other than that delicious nectar, which, as we have already hinted, she so cordially distributed from a small cask that hung before her, depending from her shoulders by a leathern zone. Thus determined, ere he was yet twelve days old, she enclosed him in a canvas knapsack, which being adjusted to her neck, fell down upon her back, and balanced the cargo that rested on her bosom.

There are not wanting those who affirm, that, while her double charge was carried about in this situation,

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her keg was furnished with a long and slender flexible tube, which, when the child began to be clamorous, she conveyed into his mouth, and straight he stilled himself with sucking; but this we consider as an extravagant assertion of those who mix the marvellous in all their narrations, because we cannot conceive how the tender organs of an infant could digest such a fiery beverage, which never fails to discompose the constitutions of the most hardy and robust. We therefore conclude that the use of this potation was more restrained, and that it was with simple element diluted into a composition adapted to his taste and years. Be this as it will, he certainly was indulged in the use of it to such a degree as would have effectually obstructed his future fortune, had not he been happily cloyed with the repetition of the same fare, for which he conceived the utmost detestation and abhorrence, rejecting it with loathing and disgust, like those choice spirits, who, having been crammed with religion in their childhood, renounce it in their youth, among other absurd prejudices of education.

While he was thus dangled in a state of suspension, a German trooper was transiently smit with the charms of his mother, who listened to his honourable addresses, and once more received the silken bonds of matrimony; the ceremony having been performed as usual at the drum-head. The lady had no sooner taken possession of her new name, than she bestowed it upon her son, who was thenceforward distinguished by the appellation of Ferdinand de Fadom; nor was the husband offended at this presumption in his

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wife, which he not only considered as a proof of her affection and esteem, but also as a compliment, by which he might in time acquire the credit of being the real father of such a hopeful child.

Notwithstanding this new engagement with a foreigner, our hero's mother still exercised the virtues of her calling among the English troops, so much was she biassed by that laudable partiality, which, as Horace observes, the *natale solum* generally inspires. Indeed this inclination was enforced by another reason, that did not fail to influence her conduct in this particular; all her knowledge of the High Dutch language consisted in some words of traffic absolutely necessary for the practice of her vocation, together with sundry oaths and terms of reproach, that kept her customers in awe; so that, except among her own countrymen, she could not indulge that propensity to conversation, for which she had been remarkable from her earliest years. Nor did this instance of her affection fail of turning to her account in the sequel. She was promoted to the office of cook to a regimental mess of officers; and, before the peace of Utrecht, was actually in possession of a suttling-tent, pitched for the accommodation of the gentlemen in the army.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand improved apace in the accomplishments of infancy; his beauty was conspicuous, and his vigour so uncommon, that he was with justice likened unto Hercules in the cradle. The friends of his father-in-law dandled him on their knees, while he played with their whiskers, and, before he was thirteen months old, taught him to

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suck brandy impregnated with gunpowder, through the touch-hole of a pistol. At the same time, he was caressed by divers serjeants of the British army, who severally and in secret contemplated his qualifications with a father's pride, excited by the artful declaration with which the mother had flattered each apart.

Soon as the war was (for her unhappily) concluded, she, as in duty bound, followed her husband into Bohemia; and his regiment being sent into garrison at Prague, she opened a cabaret in that city, which was frequented by a good many guests of the Scotch and Irish nations, who were devoted to the exercise of arms in the service of the Emperor. It was by this communication that the English tongue became vernacular to young Ferdinand, who, without such opportunity, would have been a stranger to the language of his forefathers, in spite of all his mother's loquacity and elocution; though it must be owned, for the credit of her maternal care, that she let slip no occasion of making it familiar to his ear and conception; for, even at those intervals in which she could find no person to carry on the altercation, she used to hold forth in earnest soliloquies upon the subject of her own situation, giving vent to many opprobrious invectives against her husband's country, between which and Old England she drew many odious comparisons; and prayed, without ceasing, that Europe might speedily be involved in a general war, so as that she might have some chance of re-enjoying the pleasures and emoluments of a Flanders campaign.

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CHAPTER THREE

HE IS INITIATED IN A MILITARY LIFE, AND HAS THE GOOD FORTUNE TO ACQUIRE A GENEROUS PATRON.

WHILE she wearied Heaven with these petitions, the flame of war broke out betwixt the houses of Ottoman and Austria, and the Emperor sent forth an army into Hungary, under the auspices of the renowned Prince Eugene. On account of this expedition, the mother of our hero gave up housekeeping, and cheerfully followed her customers and husband into the field; having first provided herself with store of those commodities in which she had formerly merchandised. Although the hope of profit might in some measure affect her determination, one of the chief motives for her visiting the frontiers of Turkey, was the desire of initiating her son in the rudiments of his education, which she now thought high time to inculcate, he being, at this period, in the sixth year of his age; he was accordingly conducted to the camp, which she considered as the most consummate school of life, and proposed for the scene of his instruction; and in this academy he had not continued many weeks, when he was an eye-witness of that famous victory, which, with sixty thousand men, the

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Imperial general obtained over an army of one hundred and fifty thousand Turks.

His father-in-law was engaged, and his mother would not be idle on this occasion. She was a perfect mistress of all the camp qualifications, and thought it a duty incumbent on her to contribute all that lay in her power towards distressing the enemy. With these sentiments she hovered about the skirts of the army, and the troops were no sooner employed in the pursuit, than she began to traverse the field of battle with a poignard and a bag, in order to consult her own interest, annoy the foe, and exercise her humanity at the same time. In short, she had, with amazing prowess, delivered some fifty or threescore disabled Mussulmen of the pain under which they groaned, and made a comfortable booty of the spoils of the slain, when her eyes were attracted by the rich attire of an Imperial officer, who lay bleeding on the plain, to all appearance in the agonies of death.

She could not in her heart refuse that favour to a friend and Christian she had so compassionately bestowed upon so many enemies and infidels, and therefore drew near with the sovereign remedy, which she had already administered with such success. As she approached this deplorable object of pity, her ears were surprised with an ejaculation in the English tongue, which he fervently pronounced, though with a weak and languid voice, recommending his soul to God, and his family to the protection of Heaven. Our Amazon's purpose was staggered by this providential incident; the sound of her native

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language, so unexpectedly heard, and so pathetically delivered, had a surprising effect upon her imagination; and the faculty of reflection did not forsake her in such emergency. Though she could not recollect the features of this unhappy officer, she concluded, from his appearance, that he was some person of distinction in the service, and foresaw greater advantage to herself in attempting to preserve his life, than she could possibly reap from the execution of her first resolve. "If," said she to herself, "I can find means of conveying him to his tent alive, he cannot but in conscience acknowledge my humanity with some considerable recompense; and, should he chance to survive his wounds, I have everything to expect from his gratitude and power."

Fraught with these prudential suggestions, she drew near the unfortunate stranger, and, in a softened accent of pity and condolence, questioned him concerning his name, condition, and the nature of his mischance, at the same time making a gentle tender of her service. Agreeably surprised to hear himself accosted in such a manner, by a person whose equipage seemed to promise far other designs, he thanked her in the most grateful terms for her humanity, with the appellation of kind countrywoman; gave her to understand that he was colonel of a regiment of horse; that he had fallen in consequence of a shot he received in his breast at the beginning of the action; and, finally, entreated her to procure some carriage on which he might be removed to his tent. Perceiving him faint and exhausted with loss of blood, she raised up his head, and treated him with that

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cordial which was her constant companion. At that instant, espying a small body of hussars returning to the camp with the plunder they had taken, she invoked their assistance, and they forthwith carried the officer to his own quarters, where his wound was dressed, and his preserver carefully tended him until his recovery was completed.

In return for these good offices, this gentleman, who was originally of Scotland, rewarded her for the present with great liberality, assured her of his influence in promoting her husband, and took upon himself the charge of young Ferdinand's education; the boy was immediately taken into his protection, and entered as a trooper in his own regiment; but his good intentions towards his father-in-law were frustrated by the death of the German, who, in a few days after this disposition, was shot in the trenches before Temiswaer.

This event, over and above the conjugal affliction with which it invaded the lady's quiet, would have involved her in infinite difficulty and distress, with regard to her temporal concerns, by leaving her unprotected in the midst of strangers, had not she been thus providentially supplied with an effectual patron in the colonel, who was known by the appellation of Count Melvil. He no sooner saw her, by the death of her husband, detached from all personal connexions with a military life, than he proposed that she should quit her occupation in the camp, and retire to his habitation in the city of Presburg, where she would be entertained in ease and plenty during the remaining part of her natural life. With all

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due acknowledgments of his generosity, she begged to be excused from embracing his proposal, alleging she was so much accustomed to her present way of life, and so much devoted to the service of the soldiery, that she should never be happy in retirement, while the troops of any prince in Christendom kept the field.

The Count, finding her determined to prosecute her scheme, repeated his promise of befriending her upon all occasions; and in the meantime admitted Ferdinand into the number of his domestics, resolving that he should be brought up in attendance upon his own son, who was a boy of the same age. He kept him, however, in his tent, until he should have an opportunity of revisiting his family in person; and, before that occasion offered, two whole years elapsed, during which the illustrious Prince Eugene gained the celebrated battle of Belgrade, and afterwards made himself master of that important frontier.

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CHAPTER FOUR

HIS MOTHER'S PROWESS AND DEATH; TOGETHER WITH SOME INSTANCES OF HIS OWN SAGACITY.

IT would have been impossible for the mother of our adventurer, such as she hath been described, to sit quietly in her tent, while such an heroic scene was acting. She was no sooner apprised of the general's intention to attack the enemy, than she, as usual, packed up her moveables in a waggon, which she committed to the care of a peasant in the neighbourhood, and put herself in motion with the troops; big with the expectation of re-acting that part in which she had formerly acquitted herself so much to her advantage. — Nay, she by this time looked upon her own presence as a certain omen of success to the cause which she espoused; and, in their march to battle, actually encouraged the ranks with repeated declarations, importing, that she had been eye-witness of ten decisive engagements, in all of which her friends had been victorious, and imputing such uncommon good fortune to some supernatural quality inherent in her person.

Whether or not this confidence contributed to the fortune of the day, by inspiring the soldiers to an uncommon pitch of courage and resolution, I shall

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not pretend to determine. But, certain it is, the victory began from that quarter in which she had posted herself; and no corps in the army behaved with such intrepidity as that which was manifested by those who were favoured with her admonitions and example; for she not only exposed her person to the enemy's fire, with the indifference and deliberation of a veteran, but she is said to have achieved a very conspicuous exploit by the prowess of her single arm. The extremity of the line to which she had attached herself, being assaulted in flank by a body of the spahis, wheeled about, in order to sustain the charge, and received them with such a seasonable fire, as brought a great number of turbans to the ground; among those who fell, was one of the chiefs or agas, who had advanced before the rest, with a view to signalise his valour.

Our English Penthesilea no sooner saw this Turkish leader drop, than, struck with the magnificence of his own and horse's trappings, she sprung forward to seize them as her prize, and found the aga not dead, though in a good measure disabled by his misfortune, which was entirely owing to the weight of his horse, that, having been killed by a musket-ball, lay upon his leg, so that he could not disengage himself. Nevertheless, perceiving the virago approach with fell intent, he brandished his symitar, and tried to intimidate his assailant with a most horrible exclamation; but it was not the dismal yell of a dismounted cavalier, though enforced with a hideous ferocity of countenance, and the menacing gestures with which he waited her

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approach, that could intimidate such an undaunted she-campaigner; she saw him writhing in the agonies of a situation from which he could not move; and, running towards him with the nimbleness and intrepidity of a Camilla, described a semicircle in the progress of her assault, and attacking him on one side, plunged her well-tried dagger in his throat. The shades of death encompassed him, his life-blood issued at the wound, he fell prone upon the earth, he bit the dust, and having thrice invoked the name of Allah! straight expired.

While his destiny was thus fulfilled, his followers began to reel; they seemed dismayed at the fate of their chief, beheld their companions drop like the leaves in autumn, and suddenly halted in the midst of their career. The Imperialists, observing the confusion of the enemy, redoubled their fire; and, raising a dreadful shout, advanced in order to improve the advantage they had gained. The spahis durst not wait the shock of such an encounter; they wheeled to the right-about, and clapping spurs to their horses, fled in the utmost disorder. This was actually the circumstance that turned the scale of battle. The Austrians pursued their good fortune with uncommon impetuosity, and in a few minutes left the field clear for the mother of our hero, who was such an adept in the art of stripping, that in the twinkling of an eye the bodies of the aga and his Arabian lay naked to the skin. It would have been happy for her, had she been contented with these first-fruits, reaped from the fortune of the day, and retired with her spoils, which were not incon-

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siderable; but, intoxicated with the glory she had won, enticed by the glittering caparisons that lay scattered on the plain, and without doubt prompted by the secret instinct of her fate, she resolved to seize opportunity by the forelock, and once for all indemnify herself for the many fatigues, hazards, and sorrows she had undergone.

Thus determined, she reconnoitred the field, and practised her address so successfully, that in less than half an hour she was loaded with ermine and embroidery, and disposed to retreat with her burden, when her regards were solicited by a splendid bundle, which she descried at some distance lying on the ground. This was no other than an unhappy officer of hussars; who, after having the good fortune to take a Turkish standard, was desperately wounded in the thigh, and obliged to quit his horse; finding himself in such a helpless condition, he had wrapped his acquisition round his body, that whatever might happen, he and his glory should not be parted; and thus shrouded, among the dying and the dead, he had observed the progress of our heroine, who stalked about the field, like another Atropos, finishing, wherever she came, the work of death. He did not at all doubt, that he himself would be visited in the course of her peregrinations, and therefore provided for her reception, with a pistol ready cocked in his hand, while he lay perdue beneath his covert, in all appearance bereft of life. He was not deceived in his prognostic; she, no sooner eyed the golden crescent than, inflamed with curiosity or cupidity, she directed thitherward her steps, and discerning the carcase of a man, from which,

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she thought, there would be a necessity for disengaging it, she lifted up her weapon, in order to make sure of her purchase; and in the very instant of discharging her blow, received a brace of bullets in her brain.

Thus ended the mortal pilgrimage of this modern Amazon; who, in point of courage, was not inferior to Semiramis, Tomyris, Zenobia, Thalestris, or any boasted heroine of ancient times. It cannot be supposed that this catastrophe made a very deep impression upon the mind of young Ferdinand, who had just then attained the ninth year of his age, and been for a considerable time weaned from her maternal caresses; especially as he felt no wants nor grievances in the family of the Count, who favoured him with a particular share of indulgence, because he perceived in him a spirit of docility, insinuation, and sagacity, far above his years. He did not, however, fail to lament the untimely fate of his mother, with such filial expressions of sorrow, as still more intimately recommended him to his patron; who, being himself a man of extraordinary benevolence, looked upon the boy as a prodigy of natural affection, and foresaw in his future services a fund of gratitude and attachment, that could not fail to render him a valuable acquisition to his family.

In his own country, he had often seen connexions of that sort, which having been planted in the infancy of the adherent, had grown up to a surprising pitch of fidelity and friendship, that no temptation could bias, and no danger dissolve. He therefore rejoiced in the hope of seeing his own son accommodated with such a faithful attendant, in the

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person of young Fathom, on whom he resolved to bestow the same education he had planned for the other, though conveyed in such a manner as should be suitable to the sphere in which he was ordained to move. In consequence of these determinations, our young adventurer led a very easy life, in quality of page to the Count, in whose tent he lay upon a pallet, close to his field-bed, and often diverted him with his childish prattle in the English tongue, which the more seldom his master had occasion to speak, he the more delighted to hear. In the exercise of his function, the boy was incredibly assiduous and alert; far from neglecting the little particulars of his duty, and embarking in the mischievous amusements of the children belonging to the camp, he was always diligent, sedate, agreeably officious and anticipating; and in the whole of his behaviour seemed to express the most vigilant sense of his patron's goodness and generosity; nay, to such a degree had these sentiments, in all appearance, operated upon his reflection, that one morning, while he supposed the Count asleep, he crept softly to his bedside, and gently kissing his hand, which happened to be uncovered, pronounced, in a low voice, a most fervent prayer in his behalf, beseeching Heaven to shower down blessings upon him, as the widow's friend and the orphan's father. This benediction was not lost upon the Count, who chanced to be awake, and heard it with admiration; but what riveted Ferdinand in his good graces, was a discovery that our youth made, while his master was upon duty in the trenches before Belgrade.

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Two foot soldiers, standing sentry near the door of the tent, were captivated with the sight of some valuable moveables belonging to it; and supposing, in their great wisdom, that the city of Belgrade was too well fortified to be taken during that campaign, they came to a resolution of withdrawing themselves from the severe service of the trenches, by deserting to the enemy, after they should have rifled Count Melvil's tent of the furniture by which they were so powerfully allured. The particulars of this plan were concerted in the French language, which, they imagined, would screen them from all risk of being detected, in case they should be overheard, though, as there was no living creature in sight, they had no reason to believe that any person was privy to their conversation. Nevertheless, they were mistaken in both these conjectures. The conference reached the ears of Fathom, who was at the other end of the tent, and had perceived the eager looks with which they considered some parts of the furniture. He had penetration enough to suspect their desire, and, alarmed by that suspicion, listened attentively to their discourse; which, from a slender knowledge in the French tongue, he had the good fortune partly to understand.

This important piece of intelligence he communicated to the Count at his return, and measures were immediately taken to defeat the design, and make an example of the authors, who being permitted to load themselves with the booty, were apprehended in their retreat, and punished with death according to their demerits.

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CHAPTER FIVE

A BRIEF DETAIL OF HIS EDUCATION.

NOTHING could have more seasonably happened to confirm the good opinion which the colonel entertained of Ferdinand's principles. His intentions towards the boy grew every day more and more warm; and, immediately after the peace of Passarowitz, he retired to his own house at Presburg, and presented young Fathom to his lady, not only as the son of a person to whom he owed his life, but also as a lad who merited his peculiar protection and regard by his own personal virtue. The Countess, who was an Hungarian, received him with great kindness and affability, and her son was ravished with the prospect of enjoying such a companion. In short, fortune seemed to have provided for him an asylum, in which he might be safely trained up, and suitably prepared for more important scenes of life than any of his ancestors had ever known.

He was not, in all respects, entertained on the footing of his young master; yet he shared in all his education and amusements, as one whom the old gentleman was fully determined to qualify for the station of an officer in the service; and, if he did

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not eat with the Count, he was every day regaled with choice bits from his table; holding, as it were, a middle place between the rank of a relation and favourite domestic. Although his patron maintained a tutor in the house, to superintend the conduct of his heir, he committed the charge of his learning to the instructions of a public school; where he imagined the boy would imbibe a laudable spirit of emulation among his fellows, which could not fail of turning out to the advantage of his education. Ferdinand was entered in the same academy; and the two lads proceeded equally in the paths of erudition; a mutual friendship and intimacy soon ensued, and, notwithstanding the levity and caprice commonly discernible in the behaviour of such boys, very few or rather no quarrels happened in the course of their communication. Yet their dispositions were altogether different, and their talents unlike. Nay, this dissimilarity was the very bond of their union; because it prevented that jealousy and rivalship which often interrupts the harmony of two warm contemporaries.

The young Count made extraordinary progress in the exercises of the school, though he seemed to take very little pains in the cultivation of his studies; and became a perfect hero in all the athletic diversions of his fellow-scholars; but, at the same time, exhibited such a bashful appearance and uncouth address, that his mother despaired of ever seeing him improved into any degree of polite behaviour. On the other hand, Fathom, who was in point of learning a mere dunce, became, even in his childhood, remark-

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able among the ladies for his genteel deportment and vivacity; they admired the proficiency he made under the directions of his dancing-master, the air with which he performed his obeisance at his entrance and exit; and were charmed with the agreeable assurance and lively sallies of his conversation; while they expressed the utmost concern and disgust at the boorish demeanour of his companion, whose extorted bows resembled the pawings of a mule, who hung his head in silence like a detected sheep-stealer, who sat in company under the most awkward expressions of constraint, and whose discourse never exceeded the simple monosyllables of negation and assent.

In vain did all the females of the family propose to him young Fathom, as a pattern and reproach. He remained unaltered by all their efforts and expostulations, and allowed our adventurer to enjoy the triumph of his praise, while he himself was conscious of his own superiority in those qualifications which seemed of more real importance than the mere exteriors and forms of life. His present ambition was not to make a figure at his father's table, but to eclipse his rivals at school, and to acquire an influence and authority among these confederates. Nevertheless, Fathom might possibly have fallen under his displeasure or contempt, had not that pliant genius found means to retain his friendship by seasonable compliances and submission; for the sole study, or at least the chief aim of Ferdinand, was to make himself necessary and agreeable to those on whom his dependence was placed. His talent was

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in this particular suited to his inclination; he seemed to have inherited it from his mother's womb; and, without all doubt, would have raised upon it a most admirable superstructure of fortune and applause, had not it been inseparably yoked with a most insidious principle of self-love, that grew up with him from the cradle, and left no room in his heart for the least particle of social virtue. This last, however, he knew so well how to counterfeit, by means of a large share of ductility and dissimulation, that, surely, he was calculated by nature to dupe even the most cautious, and gratify his appetites, by levying contributions on all mankind.

So little are the common instructors of youth qualified to judge the capacities of those who are under their tutelage and care, that Fathom, by dint of his insinuating arts, made shift to pass upon the schoolmaster as a lad of quick parts, in despite of a natural inaptitude to retain his lessons, which all his industry could never overcome. In order to remedy, or rather to cloak this defect in his understanding, he had always recourse to the friendship of the young Count, who freely permitted him to transcribe his exercises, until a small accident happened, which had well-nigh put a stop to these instances of his generosity. — The adventure, inconsiderable as it is, we shall record, as the first overt act of Ferdinand's true character, as well as an illustration of the opinion we have advanced touching the blind and injudicious decisions of a right pedagogue.

Among other tasks imposed by the pedant upon the form to which our two companions belonged,

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they were one evening ordered to translate a chapter of Cæsar's Commentaries. Accordingly the young Count went to work, and performed the undertaking with great elegance and despatch. Fathom, having spent the night in more effeminate amusements, was next morning so much hurried for want of time, that in his transcription he neglected to insert a few variations from the text, these being the terms on which he was allowed to use it; so that it was verbatim a copy of the original. As those exercises were always delivered in a heap, subscribed with the several names of the boys to whom they belonged, the schoolmaster chanced to peruse the version of Ferdinand, before he looked into any of the rest, and could not help bestowing upon it particular marks of approbation. The next that fell under his examination was that of the young Count, when he immediately perceived the sameness, and, far from imputing it to the true cause, upbraided him with having copied the exercise of our adventurer, and insisted upon chastising him upon the spot for his want of application.

Had not the young gentleman thought his honour was concerned, he would have submitted to the punishment without murmuring; but he inherited, from his parents, the pride of two fierce nations, and, being overwhelmed with reproaches for that which he imagined ought to have redounded to his glory, he could not brook the indignity, and boldly affirmed, that he himself was the original, to whom Ferdinand was beholden for his performance. The schoolmaster, nettled to find himself mistaken in his

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judgment, resolved that the Count should have no cause to exult in the discovery he had made, and, like a true flogger, actually whipped him for having allowed Fathom to copy his exercise. Nay, in the hope of vindicating his own penetration, he took an opportunity of questioning Ferdinand in private concerning the circumstances of the translation, and our hero, perceiving his drift, gave him such artful and ambiguous answers, as persuaded him that the young Count had acted the part of a plagiary, and that the other had been restrained from doing himself justice, by the consideration of his own dependence.

This profound director did not fail, in honour of his own discernment, to whisper about the misrepresentation, as an instance of the young Count's insolence, and Fathom's humility and good sense. The story was circulated among the servants, especially the maids belonging to the family, whose favour our hero had acquired by his engaging behaviour; and at length it reached the ears of his patron, who, incensed at his son's presumption and inhospitality, called him to a severe account, when the young gentleman absolutely denied the truth of the allegation, and appealed to the evidence of Fathom himself. Our adventurer was accordingly summoned by the father, and encouraged to declare the truth, with an assurance of his constant protection; upon which Ferdinand very wisely fell upon his knees, and, while the tears gushed from his eyes, acquitted the young Count of the imputation, and expressed his apprehension, that the report had been spread by some of

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his enemies, who wanted to prejudice him in the opinion of his patron.

The old gentleman was not satisfied of his son's integrity by this declaration; being naturally of a generous disposition, highly prepossessed in favour of the poor orphan, and chagrined at the unpromising appearance of his heir, he suspected that Fathom was overawed by the fear of giving offence, and that, notwithstanding what he had said, the case really stood as it had been represented. In this persuasion, he earnestly exhorted his son to resist and combat with any impulse he might feel within himself, tending to selfishness, fraud, or imposition; to encourage every sentiment of candour and benevolence, and to behave with moderation and affability to all his fellow-creatures. He laid upon him strong injunctions, not without a mixture of threats, to consider Fathom as the object of his peculiar regard; to respect him as the son of the Count's preserver, as a Briton, a stranger, and, above all, an helpless orphan, to whom the rights of hospitality were doubly due.

Such admonitions were not lost upon the youth, who, under the rough husk of his personal exhibition, possessed a large share of generous sensibility. Without any formal professions to his father, he resolved to govern himself according to his remonstrances; and, far from conceiving the least spark of animosity against Fathom, he looked upon the poor boy as the innocent cause of his disgrace, and redoubled his kindness towards him, that his honour might never again be called in question, upon the same subject. Nothing is more liable to miscon-

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struction than an act of uncommon generosity; one half of the world mistake the motive, from want of ideas to conceive an instance of beneficence that soars so high above the level of their own sentiments; and the rest suspect it of something sinister or selfish, from the suggestions of their own sordid and vicious inclinations. The young Count subjected himself to such misinterpretation, among those who observed the increased warmth of civility and complaisance in his behaviour to Ferdinand. They ascribed it to his desire of still profiting by our adventurer's superior talents, by which alone they supposed him enabled to maintain any degree of reputation at school; or to the fear of being convicted by him of some misdemeanour of which he knew himself guilty. These suspicions were not effaced by the conduct of Ferdinand, who, when examined on the subject, managed his answers in such a manner, as confirmed their conjectures, while he pretended to refute them, and at the same time acquired to himself credit for his extraordinary discretion and self-denial.

If he exhibited such a proof of sagacity in the twelfth year of his age, what might not be expected from his finesse in the maturity of his faculties and experience? Thus secured in the good graces of the whole family, he saw the days of his puerility glide along in the most agreeable elapse of caresses and amusement. He never fairly plunged into the stream of school-education, but, by floating on the surface, imbibed a small tincture of those different sciences which his master pretended to teach. In short, he resembled those vagrant swallows that skim along

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the level of some pool or river, without venturing to wet one feather in their wings, except in the accidental pursuit of an inconsiderable fly. Yet, though his capacity or inclination was unsuited for studies of this kind, he did not fail to manifest a perfect genius in the acquisition of other more profitable arts. Over and above the accomplishments of address, for which he hath been already celebrated, he excelled all his fellows in his dexterity at fives and billiards; was altogether unrivalled in his skill at draughts and backgammon; began, even at these years, to understand the moves and schemes of chess; and made himself a mere adept in the mystery of cards, which he learned in the course of his assiduities and attention to the females of the house.

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CHAPTER SIX

HE MEDITATES SCHEMES OF IMPORTANCE.

IT was in these parties that he attracted the notice and friendship of his patron's daughter, a girl by two years older than himself, who was not insensible to his qualifications, and looked upon him with the most favourable eyes of prepossession. Whether or not he at this period of his life began to project plans for availing himself of her susceptibility, is uncertain; but, without all doubt, he cultivated her esteem with as obsequious and submissive attention as if he had already formed the design, which, in his advanced age, he attempted to put in execution.

Divers circumstances conspired to promote him in the favour of this young lady; the greenness of his years secured him from any appearance of fallacious aim; so that he was indulged in frequent opportunities of conversing with his young mistress, whose parents encouraged this communication, by which they hoped she would improve in speaking the language of her father. Such connexions naturally produce intimacy and friendship. Fathom's person was agreeable, his talents calculated for the meridian of those parties, and his manners so engaging, that

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there would have been no just subject for wonder, had he made an impression upon the tender unexperienced heart of Mademoiselle de Melvil, whose beauty was not so attractive as to extinguish his hope, in raising up a number of formidable rivals; though her expectations of fortune were such as commonly lend additional lustre to personal merit.

All these considerations were so many steps towards the success of Ferdinand's pretensions; and though he cannot be supposed to have perceived them at first, he in the sequel seemed perfectly well apprised of his advantages, and used them to the full extent of his faculties. Observing that she delighted in music, he betook himself to the study of that art, and, by dint of application and a tolerable ear, learned of himself to accompany her with a German flute, while she sung and played upon the harpsichord. The Count, seeing his inclination, and the progress he had made, resolved that his capacity should not be lost for want of cultivation; and accordingly provided him with a master, by whom he was instructed in the principles of the art, and soon became a proficient in playing upon the violin.

In the practice of these improvements and avocations, and in attendance upon his young master, whom he took care never to disoblige or neglect, he attained to the age of sixteen, without feeling the least abatement in the friendship and generosity of those upon whom he depended; but, on the contrary, receiving every day fresh marks of their bounty and regard. He had before this time been smit with the ambition of making a conquest of the young

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lady's heart, and foresaw manifold advantages to himself in becoming son-in-law to Count Melvil, who, he never doubted, would soon be reconciled to the match, if once it could be effectuated without his knowledge. Although he thought he had great reason to believe that Mademoiselle looked upon him with an eye of peculiar favour, his disposition was happily tempered with an ingredient of caution, that hindered him from acting with precipitation; and he had discerned in the young lady's deportment certain indications of loftiness and pride, which kept him in the utmost vigilance and circumspection; for he knew, that, by a premature declaration, he should run the risk of forfeiting all the advantages he had gained, and blasting those expectations that now blossomed so gaily in his heart.

Restricted by these reflections, he acted at a wary distance, and determined to proceed by the method of sap, and, summoning all his artifice and attractions to his aid, employed them under the insidious cover of profound respect, in order to undermine those bulwarks of haughtiness or discretion, which otherwise might have rendered his approaches to her impracticable. With a view to enhance the value of his company, and sound her sentiments at the same time, he became more reserved than usual, and seldomer engaged in her parties of music and cards; yet, in the midst of his reserve, he never failed in those demonstrations of reverence and regard, which he knew perfectly well how to express, but devised such excuses for his absence, as she could not help admitting. In consequence of this affected shyness,

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she more than once gently chid him for his neglect and indifference, observing, with an ironical air, that he was now too much of a man to be entertained with such effeminate diversions; but her reproofs were pronounced with too much ease and good-humour to be agreeable to our hero, who desired to see her ruffled and chagrined at his absence, and to hear himself rebuked with an angry affectation of disdain. This effort, therefore, he reinforced with the most captivating carriage he could assume, in those hours which he now so sparingly bestowed upon his mistress. He regaled her with all the entertaining stories he could learn or invent, particularly such as he thought would justify and recommend the levelling power of love, that knows no distinctions of fortune. He sung nothing but tender airs and passionate complaints, composed by desponding or despairing swains; and, to render his performances of this kind the more pathetic, interlarded them with some seasonable sighs, while the tears, which he had ever at command, stood collected in either eye.

It was impossible for her to overlook such studied emotions; she in a jocose manner taxed him with having lost his heart, rallied the excess of his passion, and in a merry strain undertook to be an advocate for his love. Her behaviour was still wide of his wish and expectation. He thought she would, in consequence of her discovery, have betrayed some interested symptom; that her face would have undergone some favourable suffusion; that her tongue would have faltered, her breast heaved, and her whole deportment betokened internal agitation and

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disorder, in which case, he meant to profit by the happy impression, and declare himself, before she could possibly recollect the dictates of her pride.—Baffled however in his endeavours, by the serenity of the young lady, which he still deemed equivocal, he had recourse to another experiment, by which he believed he should make a discovery of her sentiments beyond all possibility of doubt. One day, while he accompanied Mademoiselle in her exercise of music, he pretended all of a sudden to be taken ill, and counterfeited a swoon in her apartment. Surprised at this accident, she screamed aloud, but far from running to his assistance, with the transports and distraction of a lover, she ordered her maid, who was present, to support his head, and went in person to call for more help. He was accordingly removed to his own chamber, where, willing to be still more certified of her inclinations, he prolonged the farce, and lay groaning under the pretence of a severe fever.

The whole family was alarmed upon this occasion; for, as we have already observed, he was an universal favourite. He was immediately visited by the old Count and his lady, who expressed the utmost concern at his distemper, ordered him to be carefully attended, and sent for a physician without loss of time. The young gentleman would scarce stir from his bedside, where he ministered unto him with all the demonstrations of brotherly affection; and Miss exhorted him to keep up his spirits, with many expressions of unreserved sympathy and regard. Nevertheless, he saw nothing in her behaviour but

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what might be naturally expected from common friendship, and a compassionate disposition, and was very much mortified at his disappointment.

Whether the miscarriage actually affected his constitution, or the doctor happened to be mistaken in his diagnostics, we shall not pretend to determine; but the patient was certainly treated *secundum artem*, and all his complaints in a little time realised; for the physician, like a true graduate, had an eye to the apothecary in his prescriptions; and such was the concern and scrupulous care with which our hero was attended, that the orders of the faculty were performed with the utmost punctuality. He was blooded, vomited, purged, and blistered, in the usual forms (for the physicians of Hungary are generally as well skilled in the arts of their occupation as any other leeches under the sun), and swallowed a whole dispensary of bolusses, draughts, and apozems, by which means he became fairly delirious in three days, and so untractable, that he could be no longer managed according to rule; otherwise, in all likelihood, the world would never have enjoyed the benefit of these adventures. In short, his constitution, though unable to cope with two such formidable antagonists as the doctor and the disease he had conjured up, was no sooner rid of the one, than it easily got the better of the other; and though Ferdinand, after all, found his grand aim unaccomplished, his malady was productive of a consequence, which, though he had not foreseen it, he did not fail to convert to his own use and advantage.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

ENGAGES IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A FEMALE ASSOCIATE, IN ORDER TO PUT HIS TALENTS IN ACTION.

WHILE he displayed his qualifications in order to entrap the heart of his young mistress, he had unwittingly enslaved the affections of her maid. This attendant was also a favourite of the young lady, and, though her senior by two or three good years at least, unquestionably her superior in point of personal beauty; she moreover possessed a good stock of cunning and discernment, and was furnished by nature with a very amorous complexion. These circumstances being premised, the reader will not be surprised to find her smitten by those uncommon qualifications which we have celebrated in young Fathom. She had in good sooth long sighed in secret, under the powerful influence of his charms, and practised upon him all those little arts, by which a woman strives to attract the admiration, and ensnare the heart of a man she loves; but all his faculties were employed upon the plan which he had already projected; that was the goal of his whole attention, to which all his measures tended; and whether or not he perceived the impression he had made upon Teresa, he never gave her the least reason to believe

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he was conscious of his victory, until he found himself baffled in his design upon the heart of her mistress.— She therefore persevered in her distant attempts to allure him, with the usual coquetries of dress and address, and, in the sweet hope of profiting by his susceptibility, made shift to suppress her feelings, and keep her passion within bounds, until his supposed danger alarmed her fears, and raised such a tumult within her breast, that she could no longer conceal her love, but gave a loose to her sorrow in the most immoderate expressions of anguish and affliction, and, while his delirium lasted, behaved with all the agitation of a despairing shepherdess.

Ferdinand was, or pretended to be, the last person in the family who understood the situation of her thoughts; when he perceived her passion, he entered into deliberation with himself, and tasked his reflection and foresight, in order to discover how best he might convert this conquest to his own advantage. Here, then, that we may neglect no opportunity of doing justice to our hero, it will be proper to observe, that, howsoever unapt his understanding might be to receive and retain the usual culture of the schools, he was naturally a genius self-taught, in point of sagacity and invention.— He dived into the characters of mankind, with a penetration peculiar to himself, and, had he been admitted as a pupil in any political academy, would have certainly become one of the ablest statesmen in Europe.

Having revolved all the probable consequences of such a connexion, he determined to prosecute an

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amour with the lady whose affection he had subdued; because he hoped to interest her as an auxiliary in his grand scheme upon Mademoiselle, which he did not as yet think proper to lay aside; for he was not more ambitious in the plan, than indefatigable in the prosecution of it. He knew it would be impossible to execute his aims upon the Count's daughter under the eye of Teresa, whose natural discernment would be whetted with jealousy, and who would watch his conduct, and thwart his progress with all the vigilance and spite of a slighted maiden. On the other hand, he did not doubt of being able to bring her over to his interest, by the influence he had already gained, or might afterwards acquire over her passions; in which case, she would effectually espouse his cause, and employ her good offices with her mistress in his behalf; besides, he was induced by another motive, which, though secondary, did not fail in this case to have an effect upon his determination. He looked upon Teresa with the eyes of appetite, which he longed to gratify; for he was not at all dead to the instigations of the flesh, though he had philosophy enough to resist them, when he thought they interfered with his interest. Here the case was quite different. His desire happened to be upon the side of his advantage, and therefore, resolving to indulge it, he no sooner found himself in a condition to manage such an adventure, than he began to make gradual advances in point of warmth and particular complacency to the love-sick maid.

He first of all thanked her, in the most grateful

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terms, for the concern she had manifested at his distemper, and the kind services he had received from her during the course of it; he treated her upon all occasions with unusual affability and regard, assiduously courted her acquaintance and conversation, and contracted an intimacy that in a little time produced a declaration of love. Although her heart was too much intendered to hold out against all the forms of assault, far from yielding at discretion, she stood upon honourable terms, with great obstinacy of punctilio, and, while she owned he was master of her inclinations, gave him to understand, with a peremptory and resolute air, that he should never make a conquest of her virtue; observing, that, if the passion he professed was genuine, he would not scruple to give such a proof of it as would at once convince her of his sincerity; and that he could have no just cause to refuse her that satisfaction, she being his equal in point of birth and situation; for, if he was the companion and favourite of the young Count, she was the friend and confidant of Mademoiselle.

He acknowledged the strength of her argument, and that her condescension was greater than his deserts, but objected against the proposal, as infinitely prejudicial to the fortunes of them both. He represented the state of dependence in which they mutually stood; their utter incapacity to support one another under the consequences of a precipitate match, clandestinely made, without the consent and concurrence of their patrons. He displayed, with great eloquence, all those gay expectations they had reason to enter-

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tain, from that eminent degree of favour which they had already secured in the family; and set forth, in the most alluring colours, those enchanting scenes of pleasure they might enjoy in each other, without that disagreeable consciousness of a nuptial chain, provided she would be his associate in the execution of a plan which he had projected for their reciprocal convenience.

Having thus inflamed her love of pleasure and curiosity, he, with great caution, hinted his design upon the young lady's fortune, and, perceiving her listening with the most greedy attention, and perfectly ripe for the conspiracy, he disclosed his intention at full length, assuring her, with the most solemn protestations of love and attachment, that, could he once make himself legal possessor of an estate which Mademoiselle inherited by the will of a deceased aunt, his dear Teresa should reap the happy fruits of his affluence, and wholly engross his time and attention.

Such a base declaration our hero would not have ventured to make, had he not implicitly believed the damsel was as great a latitudinarian as himself, in point of morals and principle; and been well assured, that, though he should be mistaken in her way of thinking, so far as to be threatened with a detection of his purpose, he would always have it in his power to refute her accusation as mere calumny, by the character he had hitherto maintained, and the circumspection of his future conduct.

He seldom or never erred in his observations on the human heart. Teresa, instead of disapproving, relished the plan in general, with demonstrations of

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singular satisfaction. She at once conceived all the advantageous consequences of such a scheme, and perceived in it only one flaw, which, however, she did not think incurable. This defect was no other than a sufficient bond of union, by which they might be effectually tied down to their mutual interest. She foresaw, that, in case Ferdinand should obtain possession of the prize, he might, with great ease, deny their contract, and disavow her claim of participation. She therefore demanded security, and proposed, as a preliminary of the agreement, that he should privately take her to wife, with a view to dispel all her apprehensions of his inconstancy or deceit, as such a previous engagement would be a check upon his behaviour, and keep him strictly to the letter of their contract.

He could not help subscribing to the righteousness of this proposal, which, nevertheless, he would have willingly waived, on the supposition that they could not possibly be joined in the bands of wedlock with such secrecy as the nature of the case absolutely required. This would have been a difficulty soon removed, had the scene of the transaction been laid in the metropolis of England, where passengers are plied in the streets by clergymen, who prostitute their characters and consciences for hire, in defiance of all decency and law; but in the kingdom of Hungary, ecclesiastics are more scrupulous in the exercise of their function, and the objection was, or supposed to be, altogether insurmountable; so that they were fain to have recourse to an expedient, with which, after some hesitation, our she-adventurer was satis-

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fied. They joined hands in the sight of Heaven, which they called to witness, and to judge the sincerity of their vows, and engaged, in a voluntary oath, to confirm their union by the sanction of the church, whenever a convenient opportunity for so doing should occur.

The scruples of Teresa being thus removed, she admitted Ferdinand to the privileges of a husband, which he enjoyed in stolen interviews, and readily undertook to exert her whole power in promoting his suit with her young mistress, because she now considered his interest as inseparably connected with her own. Surely nothing could be more absurd or preposterous than the articles of this covenant, which she insisted upon with such inflexibility. How could she suppose that her pretended lover would be restrained by an oath, when the very occasion of incurring it was an intention to act in violation of all laws human and divine? and yet such ridiculous conjuration is commonly the cement of every conspiracy, how dark, how treacherous, how impious soever it may be: a certain sign that there are some remains of religion left in the human mind, even after every moral sentiment hath abandoned it; and that the most execrable ruffian finds means to quiet the suggestions of his conscience, by some reversionary hope of Heaven's forgiveness.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

THEIR FIRST ATTEMPT; WITH A DIGRESSION WHICH SOME READERS MAY THINK IMPERTINENT.

BE this as it will, our lovers, though real voluptuaries, amidst the first transports of their enjoyment did not neglect the great political aim of their conjunction. Teresa's bedchamber, to which our hero constantly repaired at midnight, was the scene of their deliberations, and there it was determined that the damsel, in order to avoid suspicion, should feign herself irritated at the indifference of Ferdinand, her passion for whom was by this time no secret in the family; and that, with a view to countenance this affectation, he should upon all occasions treat her with an air of loftiness and disdain.

So screened from all imputation of fraud, she was furnished by him with artful instructions how to sound the inclinations of her young mistress, how to recommend his person and qualifications by the sure methods of contradiction, comparisons, revilings, and reproach; how to watch the paroxysms of her disposition, inflame her passions, and improve, for his advantage, those moments of frailty from which no woman is exempted. In short, this consummate

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politician taught his agent to poison the young lady's mind with insidious conversation, tending to inspire her with the love of guilty pleasure, to debauch her sentiments, and confound her ideas of dignity and virtue. After all, the task is not difficult to lead the unpractised heart astray, by dint of those opportunities her seducer possessed. The seeds of insinuation seasonably sown upon the warm luxuriant soil of youth, could hardly fail of shooting up into such intemperate desires as he wanted to produce, especially when cultured and cherished in her unguarded hours, by that stimulating discourse which familiarity admits, and the looser passions, ingrafted in every breast, are apt to relish and excuse.

Fathom had previously reconnoitred the ground, and discovered some marks of inflammability in Mademoiselle's constitution; her beauty was not such as to engage her in those gaieties of amusement which could flatter her vanity and dissipate her ideas; and she was of an age when the little loves and young desires take possession of the fancy; he therefore concluded, that she had the more leisure to indulge these enticing images of pleasure that youth never fails to create, particularly in those who, like her, were addicted to solitude and study.

Teresa, full fraught with the wily injunctions of her confederate, took the field, and opened the campaign with such remarkable sourness in her aspect when Ferdinand appeared, that her young lady could not help taking notice of her affected chagrin, and asked the reason of such apparent alteration in her way

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of thinking. Prepared for this question, the other replied, in a manner calculated for giving Mademoiselle to understand, that, whatever impressions Ferdinand might have formerly made on her heart, they were now altogether effaced by the pride and insolence with which he had received her advances; and that her breast now glowed with all the revenge of a slighted lover.

To evince the sincerity of this declaration, she bitterly inveighed against him, and even affected to depreciate those talents, in which she knew his chief merit to consist; hoping, by these means, to interest Mademoiselle's candour in his defence. So far the train succeeded. That young lady's love for truth was offended at the calumnies that were vented against Ferdinand in his absence. She chid her woman for the rancour of her remarks, and undertook to refute the articles of his dispraise. Teresa supported her own assertions with great obstinacy, and a dispute ensued, in which her mistress was heated into some extravagant commendations of our adventurer.

His supposed enemy did not fail to make a report of her success, and to magnify every advantage they had gained; believing, in good earnest, that her lady's warmth was the effect of a real passion for the fortunate Mr. Fathom. But he himself viewed the adventure in a different light, and rightly imputed the violence of Mademoiselle's behaviour to the contradiction she had sustained from her maid, or to the fire of her natural generosity glowing in behalf of innocence traduced. Nevertheless, he was perfectly

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well pleased with the nature of the contest; because, in the course of such debates, he foresaw that he should become habitually her hero, and that, in time, she would actually believe those exaggerations of his merit, which she herself had feigned, for the honour of her own arguments.

This presage, founded upon that principle of self-respect, without which no individual exists, may certainly be justified by manifold occurrences in life. We ourselves have known a very pregnant example, which we shall relate, for the emolument of the reader. A certain needy author having found means to present a manuscript to one of those sons of fortune who are dignified with the appellation of patrons, instead of reaping that applause and advantage with which he had regaled his fancy, had the mortification to find his performance treated with infinite irreverence and contempt, and, in high dudgeon and disappointment, appealed to the judgment of another critic, who, he knew, had no veneration for the first.

This common consolation, to which all baffled authors have recourse, was productive of very happy consequences to our bard; for, though the opinions of both judges concerning the piece were altogether the same, the latter, either out of compassion to the appellant, or desire of rendering his rival ridiculous in the eye of taste, undertook to repair the misfortune, and in this manner executed the plan. In a meeting of literati, to which both these wits belonged, he who had espoused the poet's cause, having previously desired another member to bring his composi-

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tion on the carpet, no sooner heard it mentioned, than he began to censure it with flagrant marks of scorn, and, with an ironical air, looking at its first condemner, observed, that he must be furiously infected with the rage of patronising, who could take such a deplorable performance into his protection. The sarcasm took effect.

The person against whom it was levelled, taking umbrage at his presumption, assumed an aspect of disdain, and replied with great animosity, that nothing was more easily supported than the character of a Zoilus, because no production was altogether free from blemishes; and any man might pronounce against any piece by the lump, without interesting his own discernment; but to perceive the beauties of a work, it was requisite to have learning, judgment, and taste; and therefore he did not wonder that the gentleman had overlooked a great many in the composition which he so contemptuously decried. A rejoinder succeeded this reply, and produced a long train of altercation, in which the gentleman, who had formerly treated the book with such disrespect, now professed himself its passionate admirer, and held forth in praise of it with great warmth and elocution.

Not contented with having exhibited this instance of regard, he next morning sent a message to the owner, importing, that he had but superficially glanced over the manuscript, and desiring the favour of perusing it a second time. Being indulged in this request, he recommended it in terms of rapture to all his friends and dependants, and, by dint of unwearied

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solicitation, procured a very ample subscription for the author.

But, to resume the thread of our story. Teresa's practices were not confined to simple defamation. Her reproaches were contrived so as to imply some intelligence in favour of the person she reviled. In exemplifying his pertness and arrogance, she repeated his witty repartee; on pretence of blaming his ferocity, she recounted proofs of his spirit and prowess; and, in explaining the source of his vanity, gave her mistress to understand, that a certain young lady of fashion was said to be enamoured of his person. Nor did this well-instructed under-strapper omit those other parts of her cue which the principal judged necessary for the furtherance of his scheme. Her conversation became less guarded, and took a freer turn than usual; she seized all opportunities of introducing little amorous stories, the greatest part of which were invented for the purposes of warming her passions, and lowering the price of chastity in her esteem; for she represented all the young lady's contemporaries in point of age and situation, as so many sensualists, who, without scruple, indulged themselves in the stolen pleasures of youth.

Meanwhile, Ferdinand seconded these endeavours with his whole industry and address. He redoubled, if possible, his deference and respect, whetting his assiduity to the keenest edge of attention; and, in short, regulated his dress, conversation, and deportment, according to the fancy, turn, and prevailing humour of his young mistress. He, moreover,

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attempted to profit by her curiosity, which he knew to be truly feminine; and having culled from the library of his patron certain dangerous books, calculated to debauch the minds of young people, left them occasionally upon the table in his apartment, after having directed Teresa to pick them up, as if by accident, in his absence, and carry them off for the entertainment of Mademoiselle; nay, this crafty projector found means to furnish his associate with some mischievous preparations, which were mingled in her chocolate, tea, or coffee, as provocations to warm her constitution; yet all these machinations, ingenious as they were, failed, not only in fulfilling their aim, but even in shaking the foundations of her virtue or pride, which stood their assaults unmoved, like a strong tower built upon a rock, impregnable to all the tempestuous blasts of heaven.

Not but that the conspirators were more than once mistaken in the effects of their artifices, and disposed to applaud themselves on the progress they had made. When at any time she expressed a desire to examine those performances which were laid before her as snares to entrap her chastity, they attributed that, which was no other than curiosity, to a looseness of sentiment; and when she discovered no aversion to hear those anecdotes concerning the frailty of her neighbours, they imputed to abatement of chastity that satisfaction which was the result of self-congratulation on her own superior virtue.

So far did the treacherous accomplice of Fathom presume upon these misconstructions, that she at length divested her tongue of all restraint, and

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behaved in such a manner, that the young lady, confounded and incensed at her indecency and impudence, rebuked her with great severity, and commanded her to reform her discourse, on pain of being dismissed with disgrace from her service.

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CHAPTER NINE

THE CONFEDERATES CHANGE THEIR BATTERY, AND ACHIEVE A REMARKABLE ADVENTURE.

THUNDERSTRUCK at this disappointment, the confederates held a council, in order to deliberate upon the next measures that should be taken; and Ferdinand, for the present, despairing of accomplishing his grand aim, resolved to profit in another manner, by the conveniency of his situation. He represented to his helpmate, that it would be prudent for them to make hay while the sun shone, as their connexion might be sooner or later discovered, and an end put to all those opportunities which they now so happily enjoyed. All principles of morality had been already excluded from their former plan; consequently he found it an easy task to interest Teresa in any other scheme tending to their mutual advantage, howsoever wicked and perfidious it might be. He therefore persuaded her to be his auxiliary in defrauding Mademoiselle at play, and gave her suitable directions for that purpose; and even tutored her how to abuse the trust reposed in her, by embezzling the young lady's effects, without incurring the suspicion of dishonesty.

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On the supposition that every servant in the house was not able to resist such temptation, the purse of her mistress, to which the maid had always access, was dropped in a passage which the domestics had occasion to frequent; and Fathom posted himself in a convenient place, in order to observe the effect of his stratagem. Here he was not disappointed in his conjecture. The first person who chanced to pass that way, was one of the chambermaids, with whom Teresa had lived for some time in a state of inveterate enmity, because the wench had failed in that homage and respect which was paid to her by the rest of the servants.

Ferdinand had, in his heart, espoused the quarrel of his associate, and longed for an occasion to deliver her from the malicious observance of such an antagonist. When he, therefore, saw her approach, his heart throbbed with joyful expectations; but, when she snatched up the purse, and thrust it in her bosom, with all the eagerness and confusion of one determined to appropriate the windfall to her own use, his transports were altogether unspeakable. He traced her to her own apartment, whither she immediately retreated with great trepidation, and then communicated the discovery to Teresa, together with instructions how to behave in the sequel.

In conformity with these lessons, she took the first opportunity of going to Mademoiselle, and demanding money for some necessary expense, that the loss might be known before the finder could have leisure to make any fresh conveyance of the prize; and, in the meantime, Ferdinand kept a strict eye upon the

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motions of the chambermaid. The young lady, having rummaged her pockets in vain, expressed some surprise at the loss of her purse; upon which her attendant gave indications of extreme amazement and concern. She said, it could not possibly be lost; entreated her to search her escritoir, while she herself ran about the room, prying into every corner, with all the symptoms of fear and distraction. Having made this unsuccessful inquiry, she pretended to shed a flood of tears, bewailing her own fate, in being near the person of any lady who met with such a misfortune, by which, she observed, her character might be called in question. She produced her own keys, and begged upon her knees, that her chamber and boxes might be searched without delay.

In a word, she demeaned herself so artfully upon this occasion, that her mistress, who never entertained the least doubt of her integrity, now looked upon her as a miracle of fidelity and attachment, and was at infinite pains to console her for the accident which had happened; protesting that, for her own part, the loss of the money should never affect her with a moment's uneasiness, if she could retrieve a certain medal which she had long kept in her purse, as a remembrance of her deceased aunt, from whom she received it in a present.

Fathom entered accidentally into the midst of this well-acted scene, and, perceiving the agitation of the maid, and the concern of the mistress, desired, in a respectful manner, to know the cause of their disorder. Before the young lady had time to make him acquainted with the circumstances of the case, his

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accomplice exclaimed, in an affected passion, "Mr. Fathom, my lady has lost her purse; and, as no persons in the family are so much about her as you and I, you must give me leave, in my own justification, to insist upon Mademoiselle's ordering the apartments of us both to be searched without loss of time. Here are my pockets and my keys, and you cannot scruple to give her the same satisfaction; for innocence has nothing to fear."

Miss Melvil reprimanded her sharply for her unmannerly zeal; and Ferdinand eyeing her with a look of disdain, "Madam," said he, "I approve of your proposal; but, before I undergo such mortification, I would advise Mademoiselle to subject the two chambermaids to such inquiry; as they also have access to the apartments, and are, I apprehend, as likely as you or I to behave in such a scandalous manner."

The young lady declared that she was too well satisfied of Teresa's honesty and Ferdinand's honour, to harbour the least suspicion of either, and that she would sooner die than disgrace them so far as to comply with the proposal the former had made; but as she saw no reason for exempting the inferior servants from that examination which Fathom advised, she would forthwith put it in execution. The chambermaids being accordingly summoned, she calmly asked if either of them had accidentally found the purse she had dropped? and both replying in the negative, she assumed an air of severity and determination, and demanding their keys, threatened to examine their trunks on the instant.

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The guilty Abigail, who, though an Hungarian, was not inferior, in point of effrontery, to any one of the sisterhood in England, no sooner heard this menace, than she affected an air of affronted innocence, thanked God she had lived in many reputable families, and been trusted with untold gold, but was never before suspected of theft; that the other maid might do as she should think proper, and be mean-spirited enough to let her things be tumbled topsy-turvy and exposed; but, for her own part, if she should be used in that inhuman and disgraceful manner, she would not stay another hour in the house; and in conclusion said, that Mademoiselle had more reason to look sharp after those who enjoyed the greatest share of her favour, than believe their malicious insinuations against innocent people whom they were well known to hate and defame.

This declaration, implying an hint to the prejudice of Teresa, far from diverting Miss Melvil from her purpose, served only to enhance the character of the accused in her opinion, and to confirm her suspicion of the accuser, of whom she again demanded her keys, protesting that, should she prove refractory, the Count himself should take cognisance of the affair, whereas, if she would deal ingenuously, she should have no cause to repent of her confession. So saying, she desired our adventurer to take the trouble of calling up some of the men-servants; upon which the conscious criminal began to tremble, and, falling upon her knees, acknowledged her guilt, and implored the forgiveness of her young mistress.

Teresa, seizing this occasion to signalise her gen-

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erosity, joined in the request, and the offender was pardoned, after having restored the purse, and promised in the sight of Heaven, that the devil should never again entice her to the commission of such a crime. This adventure fully answered all the purposes of our politician; it established the opinion of his fellow-labourer's virtue, beyond the power of accident or information to shake, and set up a false beacon to mislead the sentiments of Mademoiselle, in case she should for the future meet with the like misfortune.

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CHAPTER TEN

THEY PROCEED TO LEVY CONTRIBUTIONS WITH GREAT SUCCESS, UNTIL OUR HERO SETS OUT WITH THE YOUNG COUNT FOR VIENNA, WHERE HE ENTERS INTO LEAGUE WITH ANOTHER ADVENTURER.

UNDER this secure cover, Teresa levied contributions upon her mistress with great success. Some trinket was missing every day; the young lady's patience began to fail; the faithful attendant was overwhelmed with consternation, and, with the appearance of extreme chagrin, demanded her dismission, affirming that these things were certainly effected by some person in the family, with a view of murdering her precious reputation. Miss Melvil, not without difficulty, quieted her vexation with assurances of inviolable confidence and esteem, until a pair of diamond earrings vanished, when Teresa could no longer keep her affliction within bounds. Indeed, this was an event of more consequence than all the rest which had happened, for the jewels were valued at five hundred florins.

Mademoiselle was accordingly alarmed to such a degree, that she made her mother acquainted with her loss, and that good lady, who was an excellent economist, did not fail to give indications of extraor-

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dinary concern. She asked, if her daughter had reason to suspect any individual in the family, and if she was perfectly confident of her own woman's integrity? Upon which Mademoiselle, with many encomiums on the fidelity and attachment of Teresa, recounted the adventure of the chambermaid, who immediately underwent a strict inquiry, and was even committed to prison, on the strength of her former misdemeanour. Our adventurer's mate insisted upon undergoing the same trial with the rest of the domestics, and, as usual, comprehended Fathom in her insinuations; while he seconded the proposal, and privately counselled the old lady to introduce Teresa to the magistrate of the place. By these preconcerted recriminations, they escaped all suspicion of collusion. After a fruitless inquiry, the prisoner was discharged from her confinement, and turned out of the service of the Count, in whose private opinion the character of no person suffered so much, as that of his own son, whom he suspected of having embezzled the jewels, for the use of a certain inamorata, who, at that time, was said to have captivated his affections.

The old gentleman felt upon this occasion all that internal anguish which a man of honour may be supposed to suffer, on account of a son's degeneracy; and, without divulging his sentiments, or even hinting his suspicions to the youth himself, determined to detach him at once from such dangerous connexions, by sending him forthwith to Vienna, on pretence of finishing his exercises at the academy, and ushering him into acquaintance with the great world.

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Though he would not be thought by the young gentleman himself to harbour the least doubt of his morals, he did not scruple to unbosom himself on that subject to Ferdinand, whose sagacity and virtue he held in great veneration. This indulgent patron expressed himself in the most pathetic terms, on the untoward disposition of his son; he told Fathom, that he should accompany Renaldo (that was the youth's name) not only as a companion, but a preceptor and pattern; conjured him to assist his tutor in superintending his conduct, and to reinforce the governor's precepts by his own example; to inculcate upon him the most delicate punctilios of honour, and decoy him into extravagance, rather than leave the least illiberal sentiment in his heart.

Our crafty adventurer, with demonstrations of the utmost sensibility, acknowledged the great goodness of the Count in reposing such confidence in his integrity; which, as he observed, none but the worst of villains could abuse; and fervently wished that he might no longer exist, than he should continue to remember and resent the obligations he owed to his kind benefactor. While preparations were making for their departure, our hero held a council with his associate, whom he enriched with many sage instructions touching her future operations; he at the same time disburdened her of all or the greatest part of the spoils she had won, and after having received divers marks of bounty from the Count and his lady, together with a purse from his young mistress, he set out for Vienna, in the eighteenth year of his age, with Renaldo and his governor, who were provided

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with letters of recommendation to some of the Count's friends belonging to the Imperial court.

Such a favourable introduction could not fail of being advantageous to a youth of Ferdinand's specious accomplishments; for he was considered as the young Count's companion, admitted into his parties, and included in all the entertainments to which Renaldo was invited. He soon distinguished himself by his activity and address, in the course of those exercises that were taught at the academy of which he was pupil; his manners were so engaging as to attract the acquaintance of his fellow-students, and his conversation being sprightly and inoffensive, grew into very great request; in a word, he and the young Count formed a remarkable contrast, which, in the eye of the world, redounded to his advantage.

They were certainly, in all respects, the reverse of each other. Renaldo, under a total defect of exterior cultivation, possessed a most excellent understanding, with every virtue that dignifies the human heart; while the other, beneath a most agreeable outside, with an inaptitude and aversion to letters, concealed an amazing fund of villany and ingratitude. Hitherto his observation had been confined to a narrow sphere, and his reflections, though surprisingly just and acute, had not attained to that maturity which age and experience give; but now, his perceptions began to be more distinct, and extended to a thousand objects which had never before come under his cognisance.

He had formerly imagined, but was now fully persuaded, that the sons of men preyed upon one another,

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and such was the end and condition of their being. Among the principal figures of life, he observed few or no characters that did not bear a strong analogy to the savage tyrants of the wood. One resembled a tiger in fury and rapaciousness; a second prowled about like an hungry wolf, seeking whom he might devour; a third acted the part of a jackal, in beating the bush for game to his voracious employer; and the fourth imitated the wily fox, in practising a thousand crafty ambuscades for the destruction of the ignorant and unwary. This last was the department of life for which he found himself best qualified by nature and inclination; and he accordingly resolved that his talent should not rust in his possession. He was already pretty well versed in all the sciences of play; but he had every day occasion to see these arts carried to such a surprising pitch of finesse and dexterity, as discouraged him from building his schemes on that foundation.

He therefore determined to fascinate the judgment, rather than the eyes of his fellow-creatures, by a continual exercise of that gift of deceiving, with which he knew himself endued to an unrivalled degree; and to acquire unbounded influence with those who might be subservient to his interest, by an assiduous application to their prevailing passions. Not that play was altogether left out in the projection of his economy. — Though he engaged himself very little in the executive part of gaming, he had not been long in Vienna, when he entered into league with a genius of that kind, whom he distinguished among the pupils of the academy, and who indeed had taken

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up his habitation in that place with a view to pillage the provincials on their first arrival in town, before they could be armed with proper circumspection to preserve their money, or have time to dispose of it in any other shape.

Similar characters naturally attract each other, and people of our hero's principles are, of all others, the most apt to distinguish their own likeness wheresoever it occurs; because they always keep the faculty of discerning in full exertion. It was in consequence of this mutual alertness, that Ferdinand and the stranger, who was a native of Tyrol, perceived themselves reflected in the dispositions of each other, and immediately entered into an offensive and defensive alliance; our adventurer undertaking for the articles of intelligence, countenance, and counsel, and his associate charging himself with the risk of execution.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

FATHOM MAKES VARIOUS EFFORTS IN THE WORLD OF GALLANTRY.

THUS connected, they began to hunt in couples; and Fathom, in order to profit by the alliance with a good grace, contrived a small scheme that succeeded to his wish. Renaldo being one night intoxicated in the course of a merry-making with his fellow-pupils, from which Fathom had purposely absented himself, was by the Tyrolese so artfully provoked to play, that he could not resist the temptation, but engaged at passdice with that fell adversary, who, in less than an hour, stripped him of a pretty round sum. Next day, when the young gentleman recovered the use of his reflection, he was sensibly chagrined at the folly and precipitation of his own conduct, an account of which he communicated in confidence to our hero, with demonstrations of infinite shame and concern.

Ferdinand, having moralised upon the subject with great sagacity, and sharply inveighed against the Tyrolese, for the unfair advantage he had taken, retired to his closet, and wrote the following billet, which was immediately sent to his ally: —

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"The obligations I owe, and the attachments I feel, to the Count de Melvil, will not suffer me to be an idle spectator of the wrongs offered to his son, in the dishonourable use, I understand, you made last night of his unguarded hours. I therefore insist upon your making immediate restitution of the booty which you so unjustly got; otherwise I expect you will meet me upon the ramparts, near the bastion de la Port Neuve, to-morrow morning at daybreak, in order to justify, with your sword, the finesse you have practised upon the friend of

"FERDINAND DE FATHOM."

The gamester no sooner received this intimation, than, according to the plan which had been preconcerted betwixt the author and him, he went to the apartment of Renaldo, and presenting the sum of money which he had defrauded him of the preceding night, told him, with a stern countenance, that, though it was a just acquisition, he scorned to avail himself of his good fortune against any person who entertained the smallest doubt of his honour.

The young Count, surprised at this address, rejected his offer with disdain, and desired to know the meaning of such an unexpected declaration. Upon which, the other produced Ferdinand's billet, and threatened, in very high terms, to meet the stripling according to his invitation, and chastise him severely for his presumption. The consequence of this explanation is obvious. Renaldo, imputing the officiousness of Fathom to the zeal of his friendship, interposed in the quarrel, which was amicably compromised, not a little to the honour of our adventurer, who thus obtained an opportunity of displaying his courage

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and integrity, without the least hazard to his person; while, at the same time, his confederate recommended himself to the esteem of the young Count, by his spirited behaviour on this occasion; so that Renaldo being less shy of his company for the future, the Tyrolese had the fairer opportunities to prosecute his designs upon the young gentleman's purse.

It would be almost superfluous to say, that these were not neglected. The son of Count Melvil was not deficient in point of penetration; but his whole study was at that time engrossed by the care of his education, and he had sometimes recourse to play as an amusement by which he sought to unbend the severity of his attention. No wonder then that he fell a prey to an artful gamester, who had been regularly trained to the profession, and made it the sole study of his life; especially as the Hungarian was remarkable for a warmth of temper, which a knight of the post always knows how to manage for his own advantage.

In the course of these operations, Fathom was a very useful correspondent. He instructed the Tyrolese in the peculiarities of Renaldo's disposition, and made him acquainted with the proper seasons for profiting by his dexterity. Ferdinand, for example, who, by the authority derived to him from the injunctions of the old Count, sometimes took upon himself the office of an adviser, cunningly chose to counsel the son at those conjunctures when he knew him least able to bear such expostulation. Advice improperly administered generally acts in diametrical opposition to the purpose for which it is supposed to be given;

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at least this was the case with the young gentleman, who, inflamed by the reproof of such a tutor, used to obey the dictates of his resentment in an immediate repetition of that conduct which our adventurer had taken the liberty to disapprove; and the gamester was always at hand to minister unto his indignation. By these means he was disencumbered of divers considerable remittances, with which his father cheerfully supplied him, on the supposition that they were spent with taste and liberality, under the direction of our adventurer.

But Ferdinand's views were not confined to the narrow field of this alliance. He attempted divers enterprises in the world of gallantry, conscious of his own personal qualifications, and never doubting that he could insinuate himself into the good graces of some married lady about court, or lay an opulent dowager under contribution. But he met with an obstacle in his endeavours of this kind, which all his art was unable to surmount. This was no other than the obscurity of his birth, and the want of a title, without which no person in that country lays claim to the privileges of a gentleman. Had he foreseen this inconvenience he might have made shift to obviate the consequences, by obtaining permission to appear in the character of the Count's kinsman; though, in all probability, such an expedient would not have been extremely agreeable to the old gentleman, who was very tenacious of the honour of his family; nevertheless, his generosity might have been prevailed upon to indulge Fathom with such a pretext, in consideration of the youth's supposed attachment, and the

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obligations for which he deemed himself indebted to his deceased mother.

True it is, Ferdinand, upon his first arrival at Vienna, had been admitted into fashionable company, on the footing of Renaldo's companion, because nobody suspected the defect of his pedigree; and even after a report had been circulated to the prejudice of his extraction, by the industry of a lacquey who attended the young Count, there were not wanting many young people of distinction who still favoured him with their countenance and correspondence; but he was no longer invited to private families, in which only he could expect to profit by his address among the ladies, and had the mortification of finding himself frequently excepted from parties which were expressly calculated for the entertainment of the young Count. Luckily, his spirit was so pliant as to sustain these slights without being much dejected; instead of repining at the loss of that respect which had been paid to him at first, he endeavoured, with all his might, to preserve the little that still remained, and resolved to translate into a humbler sphere that gallantry which he had no longer opportunities of displaying in the world of rank and fashion.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

HE EFFECTS A LODGMENT IN THE HOUSE OF A RICH JEWELLER.

IN consequence of this determination, he to the uttermost exerted his good-humour among the few friends of consequence his fortune had left, and even carried his complaisance so far as to become the humble servant of their pleasures, while he attempted to extend his acquaintance in an inferior path of life, where he thought his talents would shine more conspicuous than at the assemblies of the great, and conduce more effectually to the interest of all his designs. Nor did he find himself disappointed in that expectation, sanguine as it was. He soon found means to be introduced to the house of a wealthy bourgeois, where every individual was charmed with his easy air and extraordinary qualifications. He accommodated himself surprisingly to the humours of the whole family; smoked tobacco, swallowed wine, and discoursed of stones with the husband, who was a rich jeweller; sacrificed himself to the pride and loquacity of the wife; and played upon the violin, and sung alternately, for the amusement of his only daughter, a buxom lass, nearly of his own age, the fruit of a former marriage.

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It was not long before Ferdinand had reason to congratulate himself on the footing he had gained in this society. He had expected to find, and in a little time actually discovered, that mutual jealousy and rancour which almost always subsist between a daughter and her step-dame, inflamed with all the virulence of female emulation; for the disparity in their ages served only to render them the more inveterate rivals in the desire of captivating the other sex. Our adventurer having deliberated upon the means of converting this animosity to his own advantage, saw no method for this purpose so feasible as that of making his approaches to the hearts of both, by ministering to each in private, food for their reciprocal envy and malevolence; because he well knew that no road lies so direct and open to a woman's heart as that of gratifying her passions of vanity and resentment.

When he had an opportunity of being particular with the mother, he expressed his concern for having unwittingly incurred the displeasure of Mademoiselle, which, he observed, was obvious in every circumstance of her behaviour towards him; protesting he was utterly innocent of all intention of offending her; and that he could not account for his disgrace any other way, than by supposing she took umbrage at the direction of his chief regards towards her mother-in-law, which, he owned, was altogether involuntary, being wholly influenced by that lady's superior charms and politeness.

Such a declaration was perfectly well calculated for the meridian of a dame like her, who with all the

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intoxications of unenlightened pride, and an increased appetite for pleasure, had begun to find herself neglected, and even to believe that her attractions were actually on the wane. She very graciously consoled our gallant for the mishap of which he complained, representing Wilhelmina (that was the daughter's name) as a pert, illiterate, envious baggage, of whose disgust he ought to make no consideration; then she recounted many instances of her own generosity to that young lady, with the returns of malice and ingratitude she had made; and, lastly, enumerated all the imperfections of her person, education, and behaviour; that he might see with what justice the gypsy pretended to vie with those who had been distinguished by the approbation and even gallantry of the best people in Vienna.

Having thus established himself her confidant and gossip, he knew his next step of promotion would necessarily be to the degree of her lover; and in that belief resolved to play the same game with Mademoiselle Wilhelmina, whose complexion was very much akin to that of her stepmother; indeed they resembled each other too much to live upon any terms of friendship or even decorum. Fathom, in order to enjoy a private conversation with the young lady, never failed to repeat his visit every afternoon, till at length he had the pleasure of finding her disengaged, the jeweller being occupied among his workmen, and his wife gone to assist at a lying-in.

Our adventurer and the daughter had already exchanged their vows, by the expressive language of the eyes; he had even declared himself in some tender

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ejaculations which had been softly whispered in her ear, when he could snatch an opportunity of venting them unperceived; nay, he had upon divers occasions gently squeezed her fair hand, on pretence of tuning her harpsichord, and been favoured with returns of the same cordial pressure; so that, instead of accosting her with the fearful hesitation and reserve of a timid swain, he told her, after the exercise of the doux-yeux, that he was come to confer with her upon a subject that nearly concerned her peace; and asked if she had not observed of late an evident abatement of friendship in her mother's behaviour to him, whom she had formerly treated with such marks of favour and respect. Mademoiselle would not pay so ill a compliment to her own discernment as to say she had not perceived the alteration; which, on the contrary, she owned was extremely palpable; nor was it difficult to divine the cause of such estranged looks. This remark was accompanied with an irresistible glance; she smiled enchanting, the colour deepened on her cheeks, her breast began to heave, and her whole frame underwent a most agreeable confusion.

Ferdinand was not a man to let such a favourable conjuncture pass unregarded. "Yes, charming Wilhelmina!" exclaimed the politician in an affected rapture, "the cause is as conspicuous as your attractions. She hath, in spite of all my circumspection, perceived that passion which it is not in my power to conceal, and in consequence of which I now declare myself your devoted adorer; or, conscious of your superior excellence, her jealousy hath taken the alarm, and, though stung with conjecture only,

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repines at the triumph of your perfections. How far this spirit of malignity may be inflamed to my prejudice, I know not. Perhaps, as this is the first, it may be also the last opportunity I shall have of avowing the dearest sentiments of my heart to the fair object that inspired them; in a word, I may be for ever excluded from your presence. Excuse me, then, divine creature! from the practice of those unnecessary forms, which I should take pride in observing, were I indulged with the ordinary privileges of an honourable lover; and, once for all, accept the homage of an heart overflowing with love and admiration. Yes, adorable Wilhelmina! I am dazzled with your supernatural beauty; your other accomplishments strike me with wonder and awe. I am enchanted by the graces of your deportment, ravished with the charms of your conversation; and there is a certain tenderness of benevolence in that endearing aspect, which, I trust, will not fail to melt with sympathy at the emotions of a faithful slave like me."

So saying, he threw himself upon his knees, and, seizing her plump hand, pressed it to his lips with all the violence of real transport. The nymph, whose passions nature had filled to the brim, could not hear such a rhapsody unmoved. Being an utter stranger to addresses of this kind, she understood every word of it in the literal acceptation; she believed implicitly in the truth of the encomiums he had bestowed, and thought it reasonable he should be rewarded for the justice he had done to her qualifications, which had hitherto been almost altogether overlooked. In short,

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her heart began to thaw, and her face to hang out the flag of capitulation; which was no sooner perceived by our hero, than he renewed his attack with redoubled fervour, pronouncing in a most vehement tone, "Light of my eyes, and empress of my soul! behold me prostrate at your feet, waiting with the most pious resignation, for that sentence from your lips, on which my future happiness or misery must altogether depend. Not with more reverence does the unhappy bashaw kiss the sultan's letter that contains his doom, than I will submit to your fatal determination. Speak then, angelic sweetness! for never, ah! never will I rise from this suppliant posture, until I am encouraged to live and hope. No! if you refuse to smile upon my passion, here shall I breathe the last sighs of a despairing lover; here shall this faithful sword do the last office to its unfortunate master, and shed the blood of the truest heart that ever felt the cruel pangs of disappointed love."

The young lady, well-nigh overcome by this effusion, which brought the tears into her eyes, "Enough, enough," cried she, interrupting him, "sure you men were created for the ruin of our sex." — "Ruin!" re-echoed Fathom, "talk not of ruin and Wilhelmina! let these terms be for ever parted, far as the east and west asunder! let ever smiling peace attend her steps, and love and joy still wanton in her train! Ruin, indeed, shall wait upon her enemies, if such there be, and those love-lorn wretches who pine with anguish under her disdain. Grant me, kind Heaven, a more propitious boon; direct her genial regards

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to one whose love is without example, and whose constancy is unparalleled. Bear witness to my constancy and faith, ye verdant hills, ye fertile plains, ye shady groves, ye purling streams; and if I prove untrue, ah! let me never find a solitary willow or a bubbling brook, by help of which I may be enabled to put a period to my wretched life."

Here this excellent actor began to sob most piteously, and the tender-hearted Wilhelmina, unable longer to withstand his moving tale, with a repetition of the interjection, ah! gently dropped into his arms. This was the beginning of a correspondence that soon rose to a very interesting pitch; and they forthwith concerted measures for carrying it on without the knowledge or suspicion of her mother-in-law. Nevertheless, the young lady, vanquished as she was, and unskilled in the ways of men, would not all at once yield at discretion; but insisted upon those terms, without which no woman's reputation can be secured. Our lover, far from seeking to evade the proposal, assented to it in terms of uncommon satisfaction, and promised to use his whole industry in finding a priest upon whose discretion they could rely; nay, he certainly resolved to comply with her request in good earnest, rather than forfeit the advantages which he foresaw in their union. His good fortune, however, exempted him from the necessity of taking such a step, which at best must have been disagreeable; for so many difficulties occurred in the inquiry which was set on foot, and so artfully did Fathom in the meantime manage the influence he had already gained over her heart, that, before her

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passion could obtain a legal gratification, she surrendered to his wish, without any other assurance, than his solemn profession of sincerity and truth, on which she reposed herself with the most implicit confidence and faith.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

HE IS EXPOSED TO A MOST PERILOUS INCIDENT IN THE COURSE OF HIS INTRIGUE WITH THE DAUGHTER.

HE was rejoiced to find her so easily satisfied in such a momentous concern, for the principal aim of the intrigue was to make her necessary to his interested views, and even, if possible, an associate in the fraudulent plans he had projected upon her father; consequently he considered this relaxation in her virtue as an happy omen of his future success. All the obstacles to their mutual enjoyment being thus removed, our adventurer was by his mistress indulged with an assignation in her own chamber, which, though contiguous to that of her stepmother, was provided with a door that opened into a common staircase, to which he had access at all hours of the night.

He did not neglect the rendezvous, but, presenting himself at the appointed time, which was midnight, made the signal they had agreed upon, and was immediately admitted by Wilhelmina, who waited for him with a lover's impatience. Fathom was not deficient in those expressions of rapture that are current on those occasions; but, on the contrary,

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became so loud in the transports of self-congratulation, that his voice reached the ears of the vigilant stepmother, who wakening the jeweller from his first nap, gave him to understand that some person was certainly in close conversation with his daughter; and exhorted him to rise forthwith, and vindicate the honour of his family.

The German, who was naturally of a phlegmatic habit, and never went to bed without a full dose of the creature, which added to his constitutional drowsiness, gave no ear to his wife's intimation, until she had repeated it thrice, and used other means to rouse him from the arms of slumber. Meanwhile Fathom and his inamorata overheard her information, and our hero would have made his retreat immediately, through the port by which he entered, had not his intention been overruled by the remonstrances of the young lady, who observed that the door was already fast bolted, and could not possibly be opened without creating a noise that would confirm the suspicion of her parents; and that over and above this objection he would, in sallying from that door, run the risk of being met by her father, who in all probability would present himself before it, in order to hinder our hero's escape. She therefore conveyed him softly into her closet, where she assured him he might remain with great tranquillity, in full confidence that she would take such measures as would effectually screen him from detection.

He was fain to depend upon her assurance, and accordingly ensconced himself behind her dressing-table; but he could not help sweating with appre-

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hension, and praying fervently to God for his deliverance, when he heard the jeweller thundering at the door, and calling to his daughter for admittance. Wilhelmina, who was already undressed, and had purposely extinguished the light, pretended to be suddenly waked from her sleep, and starting up, exclaimed in a tone of surprise and affright, "Jesu, Maria! what is the matter?" — "Hussy!" replied the German in a terrible accent, "open the door this instant; there is a man in your bedchamber, and, by the lightning and thunder! I will wash away the stain he has cast upon my honour with the schellum's heart's-blood."

Not at all intimidated by this boisterous threat, she admitted him without hesitation, and, with a shrillness of voice peculiar to herself, began to hold forth upon her own innocence and his unjust suspicion, mingling in her harangue sundry oblique hints against her mother-in-law, importing, that some people were so viciously inclined by their own natures, that she did not wonder at their doubting the virtue of other people; but that these people despised the insinuations of such people, who ought to be more circumspect in their own conduct, lest they themselves should suffer reprisals from those people whom they had so maliciously slandered.

Having uttered these flowers of rhetoric, which were calculated for the hearing of her step-dame, who stood with a light at her husband's back, the young lady assumed an ironical air, and admonished her father to search every corner of her apartment. She even affected to assist his inquiry; with her own

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hands pulled out a parcel of small drawers, in which her trinkets were contained; desired him to look into her needlecase and thimble, and, seeing his examination fruitless, earnestly intreated him to rummage her closet also, saying, with a sneer, that, in all probability, the dishonourer would be found in that lurking-place. The manner in which she pretended to ridicule his apprehensions made an impression upon the jeweller, who was very well disposed to retreat into his own nest, when his wife, with a certain slyness in her countenance, besought him to comply with his daughter's request, and look into that same closet, by which means Wilhelmina's virtue would obtain a complete triumph.

Our adventurer, who overheard the conversation, was immediately seized with a palsy of fear. He trembled at every joint, the sweat trickled down his forehead, his teeth began to chatter, his hair to stand on end; and he, in his heart, bitterly cursed the daughter's petulance, the mother's malice, together with his own precipitation, by which he was involved in an adventure so pregnant with danger and disgrace. Indeed, the reader may easily conceive his disorder, when he heard the key turning in the lock, and the German swearing that he would make him food for the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air.

Fathom had come unprepared with weapons of defence, was naturally an economist of his person, and saw himself on the brink of forfeiting not only the promised harvest of his double intrigue, but also the reputation of a man of honour, upon which all his

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future hopes depended. His agony was therefore unspeakable, when the door flew open; and it was not till after a considerable pause of recollection, that he perceived the candle extinguished by the motion of the air produced from the German's sudden irruption. This accident, which disconcerted him so much as to put a full stop to his charge, was very favourable to our hero, who, summoning all his presence of mind, crept up into the chimney, while the jeweller stood at the door, waiting for his wife's return with another light; so that, when the closet was examined, there was nothing found to justify the report which the stepmother had made; and the father, after having made a slight apology to Wilhelmina for his intrusion, retired with his yoke-fellow into their own chamber.

The young lady, who little thought that her papa would have taken her at her word, was overwhelmed with confusion and dismay, when she saw him enter the closet; and, had her lover been discovered, would, in all probability, have been the loudest in his reproach, and, perhaps, have accused him of an intention to rob the house; but she was altogether astonished when she found he had made shift to elude the inquiry of her parents, because she could not conceive the possibility of his escaping by the window, which was in the third storey, at a prodigious distance from the ground; and how he should conceal himself in the apartment, was a mystery which she could by no means unfold. Before her father and mother retired, she lighted her lamp, on pretence of being afraid to be in the dark, after the

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perturbation of spirits she had undergone; and her room was no sooner evacuated of such troublesome visitants, than she secured the doors, and went in quest of her lover.

Accordingly, every corner of the closet underwent a new search, and she called upon his name with a soft voice, which she thought no other person would overhear. But Ferdinand did not think proper to gratify her impatience, because he could not judge of the predicament in which he stood by the evidence of all his senses, and would not relinquish his post, until he should be better certified that the coast was clear. Meanwhile, his Dulcinea, having performed her inquiry to no purpose, imagined there was something preternatural in the circumstance of his vanishing so unaccountably, and began to cross herself with great devotion. She returned to her chamber, fixed the lamp in the fireplace, and, throwing herself upon the bed, gave way to the suggestions of her superstition, which were reinforced by the silence that prevailed, and the gloomy glimmering of the light. She reflected upon the trespass she had already committed in her heart, and, in the conjectures of her fear, believed that her lover was no other than the devil himself, who had assumed the appearance of Fathom, in order to tempt and seduce her virtue.

While her imagination teemed with those horrible ideas, our adventurer, concluding, from the general stillness, that the jeweller and his wife were at last happily asleep, ventured to come forth from his hiding-place, and stood before his mistress all be-

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grimed with soot. Wilhelmina, lifting up her eyes, and seeing this sable apparition, which she mistook for Satan *in propria persona*, instantly screamed, and began to repeat her pater-noster with an audible voice. Upon which Ferdinand, foreseeing that her parents would be again alarmed, would not stay to undeceive her and explain himself, but, unlocking the door with great expedition, ran downstairs, and luckily accomplished his escape. This was undoubtedly the wisest measure he could have taken; for he had not performed one half of his descent toward the street, when the German was at his daughter's bedside, demanding to know the cause of her exclamation. She then gave him an account of what she had seen, with all the exaggerations of her own fancy, and, after having weighed the circumstances of her story, he interpreted the apparition into a thief, who had found means to open the door that communicated with the stair; but, having been scared by Wilhelmina's shriek, had been obliged to retreat before he could execute his purpose.

Our hero's spirits were so wofully disturbed by this adventure, that, for a whole week, he felt no inclination to visit his inamorata, and was not without apprehension that the affair had terminated in an explanation very little to his advantage. He was, however, delivered from this disagreeable suspense, by an accidental meeting with the jeweller himself, who kindly chid him for his long absence, and entertained aim in the street with an account of the alarm which his family had sustained, by a thief who

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broke into Wilhelmina's apartment. Glad to find his apprehension mistaken, he renewed his correspondence with the family, and, in a little time, found reason to console himself for the jeopardy and panic he had undergone.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

HE IS REDUCED TO A DREADFUL DILEMMA, IN CONSEQUENCE OF AN ASSIGNATION WITH THE WIFE.

NOR was his whole care and attention engrossed by the execution of this scheme upon the daughter. While he managed his concerns in that quarter with incredible ardour and application, he was not the less indefatigable in the prosecution of his design upon the mother-in-law, which he forwarded with all his art during those opportunities he enjoyed in the absence of Wilhelmina, who was frequently called away by the domestic duties of the house. The passions of the jeweller's wife were in such a state of exaltation, as exempted our hero from the repulses and fatigue attending a long siege.

We have already observed how cunningly he catered for the gratification of her ruling appetite, and have exhibited pregnant proofs of his ability in gaining upon the human heart; the reader will not therefore be surprised at the rapidity of his conquest over the affections of a lady whose complexion was perfectly amorous, and whose vanity laid her open to all the attempts of adulation. In a word, matters were quickly brought to such a mutual understanding, that, one evening, while they amused themselves

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at lansquenet, Fathom conjured her to give him the rendezvous next day at the house of any third person of her own sex, in whose discretion she could confide; and, after a few affected scruples on her side, which he well knew how to surmount, she complied with his request, and the circumstances of the appointment were settled accordingly. After this treaty, their satisfaction rose to such a warmth, and the conversation became so reciprocally endearing, that our gallant expressed his impatience of waiting so long for the accomplishment of his wishes, and, with the most eager transport, begged she would, if possible, curtail the term of his expectation, that his brain might not suffer by his standing so many tedious hours on the giddy verge of rapture.

The dame, who was naturally compassionate, sympathised with his condition, and, unable to resist his pathetic supplications, gave him to understand that his desire could not be granted, without subjecting them both to some hazard, but that she was disposed to run any risk in behalf of his happiness and peace. After this affectionate preamble, she told him that her husband was then engaged in a quarterly meeting of the jewellers, from whence he never failed to return quite overwhelmed with wine, tobacco, and the phlegm of his own constitution; so that he would fall fast asleep as soon as his head should touch the pillow, and she be at liberty to entertain the lover without interruption, provided he could find means to deceive the jealous vigilance of Wilhelmina, and conceal himself in some corner of the house, unsuspected and unperceived.

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Our lover, remembering his adventure with the daughter, would have willingly dispensed with this expedient, and began to repent of the eagerness with which he had preferred his solicitation; but, seeing there was now no opportunity of retracting with honour, he affected to enter heartily into the conversation, and, after much canvassing, it was determined, that, while Wilhelmina was employed in the kitchen, the mother should conduct our adventurer to the outer door, where he should pay the compliment of parting, so as to be overheard by the young lady; but, in the meantime, glide softly into the jeweller's bedchamber, which was a place they imagined least liable to the effects of a daughter's prying disposition, and conceal himself in a large press or wardrobe, that stood in one corner of the apartment. The scene was immediately acted with great success, and our hero cooped up in his cage, where he waited so long, that his desires began to subside, and his imagination to aggravate the danger of his situation.

"Suppose," said he to himself, "this brutal German, instead of being stupefied with wine, should come home inflamed with brandy, to the use of which he is sometimes addicted, far from feeling any inclination to sleep, he will labour under the most fretful anxiety of watching; every irascible particle in his disposition will be exasperated; he will be offended with every object that may present itself to his view; and, if there is the least ingredient of jealousy in his temper, it will manifest itself in riot and rage. What if his frenzy should prompt him

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to search his wife's chamber for gallants? this would certainly be the first place to which he would direct his inquiry; or, granting this supposition chimerical, I may be seized with an irresistible inclination to cough, before he is oppressed with sleep; he may be waked by the noise I shall make in disengaging myself from this embarrassed situation; and, finally, I may find it impracticable to retire unseen or unheard, after everything else shall have succeeded to my wish."

These suggestions did not at all contribute to the quiet of our adventurer, who, having waited three whole hours in the most uncomfortable suspense, heard the jeweller brought into the room in that very condition which his fears had prognosticated. He had, it seems, quarrelled over his cups with another tradesman, and received a salutation on the forehead with a candlestick, which not only left an ignominious and painful mark upon his countenance, but even disordered his brain to a very dangerous degree of delirium; so that, instead of allowing himself quietly to be undressed and put to bed by his wife, he answered all her gentle admonitions and caresses with the most opprobrious invectives and obstreperous behaviour; and, though he did not tax her with infidelity to his bed, he virulently accused her of extravagance and want of economy; observed, her expensive way of living would bring him to a morsel of bread; and unfortunately recollecting the attempt of the supposed thief, started up from his chair, swearing by G—d's mother that he would forthwith arm himself with a brace of pistols, and

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search every apartment in the house. "That press," said he, with great vociferation, "may, for aught I know, be the receptacle of some ruffian."

So saying, he approached the ark in which Fathom was embarked, and exclaiming, "Come forth, Satan," applied his foot to the door of it, with such violence as threw him from the centre of gravity, and laid him sprawling on his back. This address made such an impression upon our adventurer, that he had well-nigh obeyed the summons, and burst from his concealment, in a desperate effort to escape, without being recognised by the intoxicated German; and indeed, had the application been repeated, he in all likelihood would have tried the experiment, for by this time his terrors had waxed too strong to be much longer suppressed. From this hazardous enterprise he was, however, exempted by a lucky accident that happened to his disturber, whose head chancing to pitch upon the corner of a chair in his fall, he was immediately lulled into a trance, during which the considerate lady, guessing the disorder of her gallant, and dreading further interruption, very prudently released him from his confinement, after she had put out the light, and in the dark conveyed him to the door, where he was comforted with the promise that she would punctually remember the rendezvous of next day.

She then invoked the assistance of the servants, who, being waked for the purpose, lifted up their master, and tumbled him into bed, while Ferdinand hied him home in an universal sweat, blessing himself from any future achievement of that sort in a

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house where he had been twice in such imminent danger of life and reputation. Nevertheless, he did not fail to honour the assignation, and avail himself of the disposition his mistress manifested to make him all the recompense in her power for the disappointment and chagrin which he had undergone.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

BUT AT LENGTH SUCCEEDS IN HIS ATTEMPT UPON BOTH.

HAVING thus gained a complete victory over the affections of these two ladies, he began to convert his good fortune to the purposes of that principle, from which his view was never, no, not for a moment, detached. In other words, he used them as ministers and purveyors to his avarice and fraud. As for the mother-in-law, she was of herself so liberal as to anticipate the wishes of any moderate adventurer, and presented him with sundry valuable jewels, as memorials of her esteem; nor was the daughter backward in such expressions of regard; she already considered his interest as her own, and took frequent opportunities of secreting for his benefit certain stray trinkets that she happened to pick up in her excursions within doors.

All these gratifications he received with demonstrations of infinite constraint and reluctance, and, in the midst of his rapacious extortion, acted so cunningly as to impose himself upon both for a miracle of disinterested integrity. Yet, not contented with what he thus could earn, and despairing of being able to steer the bark of his fortune for any length of time between two such dangerous quicksands, he

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resolved to profit by the occasion while it lasted, and strike some considerable stroke at once. A plan was formed in consequence of this determination, and, at an appointment with the mother in the house of their female friend, our adventurer appeared with an air of dejection, which he veiled with a thin cover of forced pleasantry, that his mistress might suppose he endeavoured to conceal some mortal chagrin that preyed upon his heart.

The stratagem succeeded to his wish. She observed his countenance between whiles overcast, took notice of the involuntary sighs he heaved; and, with the most tender expressions of sympathy, conjured him to make her acquainted with the cause of his affliction. Instead of gratifying her request immediately, he evaded her questions with a respectful reserve, implying, that his love would not suffer him to make her a partner in his sorrow; and this delicacy on his part whetted her impatience and concern to such a degree, that, rather than keep her in such an agony of doubt and apprehension, he was prevailed upon to tell her, that he had been, the preceding night, engaged with a company of his fellow-students, where he had made too free with the champagne, so that his caution forsook him, and he had been decoyed into play by a Tyrolese gamester, who stripped him of all his ready money, and obtained from him an obligation for two hundred florins, which he could not possibly pay without having recourse to his relation the Count de Melvil, who would have just cause to be incensed at his extravagance.

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This information he concluded, by declaring that, cost what it would, he was resolved to make a candid confession of the truth, and throw himself entirely upon the generosity of his patron, who could inflict no other punishment than that of discarding him from his favour and protection,— a misfortune which, how grievous soever it might be, he should be able to sustain with fortitude, could he fall upon some method of satisfying the Tyrolese, who was very importunate and savage in his demand. His kind mistress no sooner found out the source of his inquietude, than she promised to dry it up, assuring him that next day, at the same hour, she would enable him to discharge the debt; so that he might set his heart at ease, and recollect that gaiety which was the soul of her enjoyment.

He expressed the utmost astonishment at this generous proffer, which, however, he declined, with an affected earnestness of refusal, protesting, that he should be extremely mortified, if he thought she looked upon him as one of those mercenary gallants who could make such a sordid use of a lady's affection. "No, madam," cried our politician in a pathetic strain, "whatever happens, I shall never part with that internal consolation, that conscious honour never fails to yield in the deepest scenes of solitary distress. The attachment I have the honour to profess for your amiable person, is not founded on such inglorious motives, but is the genuine result of that generous passion which none but the noble-minded feel, and the only circumstance of this misfortune that I dread to encounter, is the necessity of with-

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drawing myself for ever from the presence of her whose genial smiles could animate my soul against all the persecution of adverse fortune."

This declamation, accompanied with a profound sigh, served only to inflame her desire of extricating him from the difficulty in which he was involved. She exhausted all her eloquence in attempting to persuade him that his refusal was an outrage against her affection. He pretended to refute her arguments, and remained unshaken by all the power of her solicitations, until she had recourse to the most passionate remonstrances of love, and fell at his feet in the posture of a forlorn shepherdess. What he refused to her reason, he granted to her tears, because his heart was melted by her affliction, and next day condescended to accept of her money, out of pure regard to her happiness and peace.

Encouraged by the success of this achievement, he resolved to practise the same experiment upon Wilhelmina, in hope of extracting an equal share of profit from her simplicity and attachment, and, at their very next nocturnal rendezvous in her chamber, reacted the farce already rehearsed, with a small variation, which he thought necessary to stimulate the young lady in his behalf. He rightly concluded, that she was by no means mistress of such a considerable sum as he had already extorted from her mother, and therefore thought proper to represent himself in the most urgent predicament, that her apprehension, on his account, might be so alarmed as to engage her in some enterprise for his advantage, which otherwise she would never have dreamed of

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undertaking. With this view, after having described his own calamitous situation, in consequence of her pressing entreaties, which he affected to evade, he gave her to understand, that there was no person upon earth to whom he would have recourse in this emergency; for which reason he was determined to rid himself of all his cares at once, upon the friendly point of his own faithful sword.

Such a dreadful resolution could not fail to operate upon the tender passions of his Dulcinea; she was instantly seized with an agony of fear and distraction. Her grief manifested itself in a flood of tears, while she hung round his neck, conjuring him in the most melting terms, by their mutual love, in which they had been so happy, to lay aside that fatal determination, which would infallibly involve her in the same fate; for, she took Heaven to witness, that she would not one moment survive the knowledge of his death.

He was not deficient in expressions of reciprocal regard. He extolled her love and tenderness with a most extravagant eulogium, and seemed wrung with mortal anguish at the prospect of parting for ever from his lovely Wilhelmina; but his honour was a stern and rigid creditor, that could not be appeased, except with his blood; and all the boon she could obtain, by dint of the most woful supplication, was a promise to defer the execution of his baleful purpose for the space of four-and-twenty hours, during which she hoped Heaven would compassionate her sufferings, and inspire her with some contrivance for their mutual relief. Thus he yielded to her fervent

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request, rather with a view to calm the present transports of her sorrow, than with any expectation of seeing himself redeemed from his fate by her interposition; such at least were his professions when he took his leave, assuring her, that he would not quit his being before he should have devoted a few hours to another interview with the dear object of his love.

Having thus kindled the train, he did not doubt that the mine of his craft would take effect, and repaired to his own lodging, in full persuasion of seeing his aim accomplished, before the time fixed for their last assignation. His prognostic was next morning verified by the arrival of a messenger, who brought to him a small parcel, to which was cemented, with sealing wax, the following epistle: —

"JEWEL OF MY SOUL! — Scarce had you, last night, quitted my disconsolate arms, when I happily recollected that there was in my possession a gold chain, of value more than sufficient to answer the exigence of your present occasions. It was pledged to my grandfather for two hundred crowns by a knight of Malta, who soon after perished in a sea engagement with the enemies of our faith, so that it became the property of our house, and was bequeathed to me by the old gentleman, as a memorial of his particular affection. Upon whom can I more properly bestow it, than him who is already master of my heart! Receive it, therefore, from the bearer of this billet, and convert it, without scruple, to that use which shall be most conducive to your ease and satisfaction; nor seek, from a true romantic notion of honour, which I know you entertain, to excuse

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yourself from accepting this testimony of my affection. For I have already sworn before an image of our blessed Lady, that I will no longer own you as the sovereign of my heart, nor even indulge you with another interview, if you reject this mark of tenderness and concern from your ever faithful

"WILHELMINA."

The heart of our adventurer began to bound with joy when he surveyed the contents of this letter; and his eyes sparkled with transport at sight of the chain, which he immediately perceived to be worth twice the sum she had mentioned. Nevertheless, he would not avail himself, without further question, of her generosity; but, that same night, repairing to her apartment at the usual hour of meeting, he prostrated himself before her, and counterfeiting extreme agitation of spirit, begged, in the most urgent terms, not even unaccompanied with tears, that she would take back the present, which he tendered for her acceptance, and spare him the most insufferable mortification of thinking himself exposed to the imputation of being mercenary in his love. Such, he said, was the delicacy of his passion, that he could not possibly exist under the apprehension of incurring a censure so unworthy of his sentiments; and he would a thousand times sooner undergo the persecution of his rancorous creditor, than bear the thought of being in the smallest consideration lessened in her esteem; nay, so far did he carry his pretensions to punctilio, as to protest, that, should she refuse to quiet the scruples of his honour on this score, her unyielding beneficence would serve only to hasten the

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execution of his determined purpose, to withdraw himself at once from a life of vanity and misfortune.

The more pathetically he pleaded for her compliance, the more strenuously did she resist his remonstrances. She advanced all the arguments her reason, love, and terror could suggest, reminded him of her oath, from which he could not suppose she would recede, whatever the consequence might be; and in conclusion vowed to Heaven, with great solemnity and devotion, that she would not survive the news of his death. Thus the alternative she offered was either to retain the chain and be happy in her affection, or forfeit all title to her love, and die in the conviction of having brought his innocent mistress to an untimely grave.

His fortitude was not proof against this last consideration. "My savage honour," said he, "would enable me to endure the pangs of eternal separation in the confidence of being endowed with the power of ending these tortures by the energy of my own hand; but the prospect of Wilhelmina's death, and that too occasioned by my inflexibility, disarms my soul of all her resolution, swallows up the dictates of my jealous pride, and fills my bosom with such a gush of tenderness and sorrow, as overwhelms the whole economy of my purpose! Yes, enchanting creature! I sacrifice my glory to that irresistible reflection; and, rather than know myself the cruel instrument of robbing the world of such perfection, consent to retain the fatal testimony of your love."

So saying, he pocketed the chain, with an air of ineffable mortification, and was rewarded for his

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compliance with the most endearing caresses of his Dulcinea, who, amidst the tumults of her joy, ejaculated a thousand acknowledgments to Heaven for having blessed her with the affection of such a man, whose honour was unrivalled by anything but his love.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

HIS SUCCESS BEGETS A BLIND SECURITY, BY WHICH HE IS ONCE AGAIN WELL-NIGH ENTRAPPED IN HIS DULCINEA'S APARTMENT.

IN this manner did the crafty Fathom turn to account those ingratiating qualifications he inherited from nature, and maintain, with incredible assiduity and circumspection, an amorous correspondence with two domestic rivals, who watched the conduct of each other with the most indefatigable virulence of envious suspicion, until an accident happened, which had well-nigh overturned the bark of his policy, and induced him to alter the course, that he might not be shipwrecked on the rocks that began to multiply in the prosecution of his present voyage.

The jeweller, who, as a German, wanted neither pride nor ostentation, never failed to celebrate the anniversary of his birth by an annual feast granted to his neighbours and friends; and on these occasions was accustomed to wear that chain which, though bequeathed to his daughter, he considered as an ornament appertaining to the family, whereof he himself was head. Accordingly, when the time of this festival revolved, he, as usual, ordered Wilhelmina to surrender it for the day. This injunction,

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the reader will perceive, our young lady was in no condition to obey; she had, however, foreseen the demand, and contrived a scheme of behaviour for the occasion, which she forthwith put in execution.

With an air of uncommon cheerfulness, purposely assumed, she retired to her closet, on pretence of complying with his desire, and, having employed a few minutes in rummaging her drawers and disordering her moveables, uttered a loud shriek, that brought her father instantly into the apartment, where he found his daughter tossing about her clothes and trinkets with violent demonstrations of disorder and affright, and heard her, in a lamentable strain, declare that she was robbed of her chain, and for ever undone. This was so far from being an agreeable intimation to the jeweller, that he was struck dumb with astonishment and vexation, and it was not till after a long pause that he pronounced the word Sacrament! with an emphasis denoting the most mortifying surprise.

Soon as that exclamation escaped from his lips, he flew to the escritoire as if instinctively, and, joining Wilhelmina in her occupation, tumbled its whole contents upon the floor in a trice.

While he was thus employed, in the most expressive silence, the wife of his bosom chanced to pass that way, and seeing them both occupied with such violence and trepidation, believed at first that they were certainly actuated by the spirit of frenzy; but, when she interposed, by asking, with great earnestness, the cause of such transports and distracted behaviour, and heard her husband reply, with an accent of

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despair, "The chain! the chain of my forefathers is no more!" she immediately justified his emotion, by undergoing the same alarm, and, without further hesitation, engaged herself in the search, beginning with a song, which might be compared to the hymn of battle among the Greeks, or rather more aptly to that which the Spartan females sung round the altar of Diana, surnamed Orthian; for it was attended with strange gesticulations, and, in the course of utterance, became so loud and shrill, that the guests, who were by this time partly assembled, being confounded at the clamour, rushed towards the place from whence it seemed to proceed, and found their landlord, with his wife and daughter, in the attitudes of distraction and despair.

When they understood the nature of the case, they condoled the family on their misfortune, and would have retired, on the supposition that it would defeat the mirthful intent of their meeting; but the jeweller, mustering up his whole temper and hospitality, entreated them to excuse his disorder, and favour him with their company, which, he observed, was now more than ever wanted, to dispel the melancholy ideas inspired by his loss. Notwithstanding this apology, and the efforts he made in the sequel to entertain his friends with jollity and good-humour, his heart was so linked to the chain, that he could not detach himself from the thoughts of it, which invaded him at short intervals in such qualms as effectually spoiled his appetite, and hindered his digestion.

He revolved within himself the circumstances of

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his disaster, and, in canvassing all the probable means by which the chain would be stolen, concluded that the deed must have been done by some person in the family, who, in consequence of having access to his daughter's chamber, had either found the drawer left open by her carelessness and neglect, or found means to obtain a false key, by some waxen impression; for the locks of the escritoire were safe and uninjured. His suspicion being thus confined within his own house, sometimes pitched upon his workmen, and sometimes upon his wife, who, he thought, was the more likely to practise such finesse, as she considered Wilhelmina in the light of a daughter-in-law, whose interest interfered with her own, and who had often harangued to him in private on the folly of leaving this very chain in the young lady's possession.

The more he considered this subject, he thought he saw the more reason to attribute the damage he had sustained to the machinations of his spouse, who, he did not doubt, was disposed to feather her own nest, at the expense of him and his heirs, and who, with the same honest intention, had already secreted, for her private use, those inconsiderable jewels which of late had at different times been missing. Aroused by these sentiments, he resolved to retaliate her own schemes, by contriving means to visit her cabinet in secret, and, if possible, to rob the robber of the spoils she had gathered to his prejudice, without coming to any explanation, which might end in domestic turmoils and eternal disquiet.

While the husband exercised his reflection in this manner, his innocent mate did not allow the powers

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of her imagination to rest in idleness and sloth. Her observations touching the loss of the chain were such as a suspicious woman, biassed by hatred and envy, would naturally make. To her it seemed highly improbable, that a thing of such value, so carefully deposited, should vanish without the connivance of its keeper, and without much expense of conjecture, divined the true manner in which it was conveyed. The sole difficulty that occurred in the researches of her sagacity, was to know the gallant who had been favoured with such a pledge of Wilhelmina's affection; for, as the reader will easily imagine, she never dreamed of viewing Ferdinand in that odious perspective. In order to satisfy her curiosity, discover this happy favourite, and be revenged on her petulant rival, she prevailed upon the jeweller to employ a scout, who should watch all night upon the stair, without the knowledge of any other person in the family, alleging, that in all likelihood, the housemaid gave private admittance to some lover who was the author of all the losses they had lately suffered, and that they might possibly detect him in his nocturnal adventures; and observing that it would be imprudent to intimate their design to Wilhelmina, lest, through the heedlessness and indiscretion of youth, she might chance to divulge the secret, so as to frustrate their aim.

A Swiss, in whose honesty the German could confide, being hired for this purpose, was posted in a dark corner of the staircase, within a few paces of the door, which he was directed to watch, and actually stood sentinel three nights, without perceiving

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the least object of suspicion; but, on the fourth, the evil stars of our adventurer conducted him to the spot, on his voyage to the apartment of his Dulcinea, with whom he had preconcerted the assignation. Having made the signal, which consisted of two gentle taps on her door, he was immediately admitted; and the Swiss no sooner saw him fairly housed, than he crept softly to the other door, that was left open for the purpose, and gave immediate intimation of what he had perceived. This intelligence, however, he could not convey so secretly, but the lovers, who were always vigilant upon these occasions, overheard a sort of commotion in the jeweller's chamber, the cause of which their apprehension was ingenious enough to comprehend.

We have formerly observed that our adventurer could not make his retreat by the door, without running a very great risk of being detected, and the expedient of the chimney he had no inclination to repeat; so that he found himself in a very uncomfortable dilemma, and was utterly abandoned by all his invention and address, when his mistress, in a whisper, desired him to begin a dialogue, aloud, in an apology, importing, that he had mistaken the door, and that his intention was to visit her father, touching a ring belonging to the young Count Melvil, which she knew Fathom had put into his hands, in order to be altered.

Ferdinand, seizing the hint, availed himself of it without delay, and, unbolting the door, pronounced in an audible voice, "Upon my honour, Mademoiselle, you wrong my intention, if you imagine I came

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hither with any disrespectful or dishonourable motive. I have business with your father, which cannot be delayed till to-morrow, without manifest prejudice to my friend and myself; therefore I took the liberty of visiting him at these untimely hours, and it has been my misfortune to mistake the door in the dark. I beg pardon for my involuntary intrusion, and again assure you, that nothing was farther from my thoughts than any design to violate that respect which I have always entertained for you and your father's family."

To this remonstrance, which was distinctly heard by the German and his wife, who by this time stood listening at the door, the young lady replied, in a shrill accent of displeasure, "Sir, I am bound to believe that all your actions are conducted by honour; but you must give me leave to tell you, that your mistake is a little extraordinary, and your visit, even to my father, at this time of the night, altogether unseasonable, if not mysterious. As for the interruption I have suffered in my repose, I impute it to my own forgetfulness, in leaving my door unlocked, and blame myself so severely for the omission, that I shall, to-morrow, put it out of my own power to be guilty of the like for the future, by ordering the passage to be nailed up; meanwhile, if you would persuade me of your well-meaning, you will instantly withdraw, lest my reputation should suffer by your continuance in my apartment."

"Madam," answered our hero, "I will not give you an opportunity to repeat the command, which I shall forthwith obey, after having entreated you

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once more to forgive the disturbance I have given." So saying, he gently opened the door, and, at sight of the German and his wife, who, he well knew, waited for his exit, started back, and gave tokens of confusion, which was partly real and partly affected. The jeweller, fully satisfied with Fathom's declaration to his daughter, received him with a complaisant look, and, in order to alleviate his concern, gave him to understand, that he already knew the reason of his being in that apartment, and desired to be informed of what had procured him the honour to see him at such a juncture.

"My dear friend," said our adventurer, pretending to recollect himself with difficulty, "I am utterly ashamed and confounded to be discovered in this situation; but, as you have overheard what passed between Mademoiselle and me, I know you will do justice to my intention, and forgive my mistake. After begging pardon for having intruded upon your family at these hours, I must now tell you that my cousin, Count Melvil, was some time ago so much misrepresented to his mother by certain malicious informers, who delight in sowing discord in private families, that she actually believed her son an extravagant spendthrift, who had not only consumed his remittances in the most riotous scenes of disorder, but also indulged a pernicious appetite for gaming, to such a degree, that he had lost all his clothes and jewels at play. In consequence of such false information, she expostulated with him in a severe letter, and desired he would transmit to her that ring which is in your custody, it being a family stone, for

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which she expressed an inestimable value. The young gentleman, in his answer to her reproof, endeavoured to vindicate himself from the aspersions which had been cast upon his character, and, with regard to the ring, told her it was at present in the hands of a jeweller, in order to be new set according to her own directions, and that, whenever it should be altered, he would send it home to her by some safe conveyance. This account the good lady took for an evasion, and upon that supposition has again written to him, in such a provoking style, that, although the letter arrived but half an hour ago, he is determined to despatch a courier before morning with the mischievous ring, for which, in compliance with the impetuosity of his temper, I have taken the freedom to disturb you at this unseasonable hour."

The German paid implicit faith to every circumstance of his story, which indeed could not well be supposed to be invented extempore; the ring was immediately restored, and our adventurer took his leave, congratulating himself upon his signal deliverance from the snare in which he had fallen.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE STEP-DAME'S SUSPICIONS BEING AWAKENED, SHE LAYS A SNARE FOR OUR ADVENTURER, FROM WHICH HE IS DELIVERED BY THE INTERPOSITION OF HIS GOOD GENIUS.

THOUGH the husband swallowed the bait without further inquiry, the penetration of the wife was not so easily deceived. That same dialogue in Wilhelmina's apartment, far from allaying, rather inflamed her suspicion; because, in the like emergency, she herself had once profited by the same, or nearly the same contrivance. Without communicating her doubts to the father, she resolved to double her attention to the daughter's future conduct, and keep such a strict eye over the behaviour of our gallant, that he should find it very difficult, if not impossible, to elude her observation. For this purpose she took into her pay an old maiden, of the right sour disposition, who lived in a house opposite to her own, and directed her to follow the young lady in all her outgoings, whenever she should receive from the window a certain signal, which the mother-in-law agreed to make for the occasion. It was not long before this scheme succeeded to her wish. The door of communication betwixt Wilhelmina's apartment and the

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staircase being nailed up by the jeweller's express order, our adventurer was altogether deprived of those opportunities he had hitherto enjoyed, and was not at all mortified to find himself so restricted in a correspondence which began to be tiresome and disagreeable. But the case was far otherwise with his Dulcinea, whose passion, the more it was thwarted, raged with greater violence, like a fire, that, from the attempts that are made to extinguish it, gathers greater force, and flames with double fury.

Upon the second day of her misfortune, she had written a very tender billet, lamenting her unhappiness in being deprived of those meetings which constituted the chief joy of her life, and entreating him to contrive some means of renewing the delicious commerce in an unsuspected place. This intimation she proposed to convey privately into the hand of her lover, during his next visit to the family; but both were so narrowly eyed by the mother, that she found the execution of her design impracticable; and next forenoon, on pretence of going to church, repaired to the house of a companion, who, being also her confidant, undertook to deliver the billet with her own hand.

The she-dragon employed by her mother, in obedience to the sign which was displayed from the window immediately put on her veil, and followed Wilhelmina at a distance, until she saw her fairly housed. She would not even then return from her excursion, but hovered about in sight of the door, with a view of making further observations. In less than five minutes after the young lady disappeared,

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the scout perceived her coming out, accompanied by her comrade, from whom she instantly parted, and bent her way towards the church in good earnest, while the other steered her course in another direction. The duenna, after a moment's suspense and consideration, divined the true cause of this short visit, and resolved to watch the motions of the confidant, whom she traced to the academy in which our hero lodged, and from which she saw her return, after the supposed message was delivered.

Fraught with this intelligence, the rancorous understrapper hied her home to the jeweller's wife, and made a faithful recital of what she had seen, communicating at the same time her own conjectures on that subject. Her employer was equally astonished and incensed at this information. She was seized with all that frenzy which takes possession of a slighted woman, when she finds herself supplanted by a detested rival; and, in the first transports of her indignation, devoted them as sacrifices to her vengeance. Nor was her surprise so much the effect of his dissimulation, as of his want of taste and discernment. She inveighed against him, not as the most treacherous lover, but as the most abject wretch, in courting the smiles of such an awkward dowdy, while he enjoyed the favours of a woman who had numbered princes in the train of her admirers. For the brilliancy of her attractions, such as they at present shone, she appealed to the decision of her minister, who consulted her own satisfaction and interest, by flattering the other's vanity and resentment; and so unaccountable did the depravity of our hero's judg-

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ment appear to this conceited dame, that she began to believe there was some mistake in the person, and to hope that Wilhelmina's gallant was not in reality her professed admirer, Mr. Fathom, but rather one of his fellow-lodgers, whose passion he favoured with his mediation and assistance.

On this notion, which nothing but mere vanity could have inspired, in opposition to so many more weighty presumptions, she took the resolution of bringing the affair to a fuller explanation, before she would concert any measures to the prejudice of our adventurer, and forthwith despatched her spy back to his lodgings, to solicit, on the part of Wilhelmina, an immediate answer to the letter he had received. This was an expedition with which the old maiden would have willingly dispensed, because it was founded upon an uncertainty, which might be attended with troublesome consequences; but, rather than be the means of retarding a negotiation so productive of that sort of mischief which is particularly agreeable to all of her tribe, she undertook to manage and effect the discovery, in full confidence of her own talents and experience.

With such a fund of self-sufficiency and instigation, she repaired to the academy on the instant, and inquiring for Mr. Fathom, was introduced to his apartment, where she found him in the very act of writing a billet to the jeweller's daughter. The artful agent having asked, with the mysterious air of an expert go-between, if he had not lately received a message from a certain young lady, and, being answered in the affirmative, gave him to understand,

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that she herself was a person favoured with the friendship and confidence of Wilhelmina, whom she had known from her cradle, and often dandled on her knee; then, in the genuine style of a prattling dry nurse, she launched out in encomiums on his Dulcinea's beauty and sweetness of temper, recounting many simple occurrences of her infancy and childhood; and, finally, desiring a more circumstantial answer to that which she had sent to him by her friend Catherina. In the course of her loquacity she had also, according to her instructions, hinted at the misfortune of the door; and, on the whole, performed her cue with such dexterity and discretion that our politician was actually overreached, and, having finished his epistle, committed it to her care, with many verbal expressions of eternal love and fidelity to his charming Wilhelmina.

The messenger, doubly rejoiced at her achievement, which not only recommended her ministry, but also gratified her malice, returned to her principal with great exultation, and, delivering the letter, the reader will easily conceive the transports of that lady when she read the contents of it in these words: —

"Angelic Wilhelmina! — To forget those ecstatic scenes we have enjoyed together, or even live without the continuation of that mutual bliss, were to quit all title to perception, and resign every hope of future happiness. No! my charmer, while my head retains the least spark of invention, and my heart glows with the resolution of a man, our correspondence shall not be cut off by the machinations of an envious stepmother, who

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never had attractions to inspire a generous passion; and, now that age and wrinkles have destroyed what little share of beauty she once possessed, endeavours, like the fiend in paradise, to blast those joys in others, from which she is herself eternally excluded. Doubt not, dear sovereign of my soul! that I will study, with all the eagerness of desiring love, how to frustrate her malicious intention, and renew those transporting moments, the remembrance of which now warms the breast of your ever constant

"FATHOM."

Had our hero murdered her father, or left her a disconsolate widow, by effecting the death of her dear husband, there might have been a possibility of her exerting the Christian virtues of resignation and forgiveness; but such a personal outrage as that contained in this epistle precluded all hope of pardon, and rendered penitence of no signification. His atrocious crime being now fully ascertained, this virago gave a loose to her resentment, which became so loud and tempestuous, that her informer shuddered at the storm she had raised, and began to repent of having communicated the intelligence which seemed to have such a violent effect upon her brain.

She endeavoured, however, to allay the agitation, by flattering her fancy with the prospect of revenge, and gradually soothed her into a state of deliberate ire; during which she determined to take ample vengeance on the delinquent. In the zenith of her rage, she would have had immediate recourse to poison or steel, had she not been diverted from her

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mortal purpose by her counsellor, who represented the danger of engaging in such violent measures, and proposed a more secure scheme, in the execution of which she would see the perfidious wretch sufficiently punished, without any hazard to her own person or reputation. She advised her to inform the jeweller of Fathom's efforts to seduce her conjugal fidelity, and impart to him a plan, by which he would have it in his power to detect our adventurer in the very act of practising upon her virtue.

The lady relished her proposal, and actually resolved to make an assignation with Ferdinand, as usual, and give notice of the appointment to her husband, that he might personally discover the treachery of his pretended friend, and inflict upon him such chastisement as the German's brutal disposition should suggest, when inflamed by that species of provocation. Had this project been brought to bear, Ferdinand, in all likelihood, would have been disqualified from engaging in any future intrigue; but fate ordained that the design should be defeated, in order to reserve him for more important occasions.

Before the circumstances of the plan could be adjusted, it was his good fortune to meet his Dulcinea in the street, and, in the midst of their mutual condolence on the interruption they had suffered in their correspondence, he assured her, that he would never give his invention respite, until he should have verified the protestations contained in the letter he had delivered to her discreet agent. This allusion to a billet she had never received, did not fail to alarm her fears, and introduce a very mortifying explana-

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tion, in which he so accurately described the person of the messenger, that she forthwith comprehended the plot, and communicated to our hero her sentiments on that subject.

Though he expressed infinite anxiety and chagrin at this misfortune, which could not fail to raise new obstacles to their love, his heart was a stranger to the uneasiness he affected; and rather pleased with the occasion, which would furnish him with pretences to withdraw himself gradually from an intercourse by this time become equally cloying and unprofitable. Being well acquainted with the mother's temperament, he guessed the present situation of her thoughts, and concluding she would make the jeweller a party in her revenge, he resolved from that moment to discontinue his visits, and cautiously guard against any future interview with the lady whom he had rendered so implacable.

It was well for our adventurer that his good fortune so seasonably interposed; for that same day, in the afternoon, he was favoured with a billet from the jeweller's wife, couched in the same tender style she had formerly used, and importing an earnest desire of seeing him next day at the wonted rendezvous. Although his penetration was sufficient to perceive the drift of this message, or at least to discern the risk he should run in complying with her request, yet he was willing to be more fully certified of the truth of his suspicion, and wrote an answer to the billet, in which he assured her, that he would repair to the place of appointment with all the punctuality of an impatient lover. Nevertheless, in-

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stead of performing this promise, he, in the morning, took post in a public-house opposite to the place of assignation, in order to reconnoitre the ground, and about noon had the pleasure of seeing the German, wrapped in a cloak, enter the door of his wife's she-friend, though the appointment was fixed at five in the evening. Fathom blessed his good angel for having conducted him clear of this conspiracy, and kept his station with great tranquillity till the hour of meeting, when he beheld his enraged Thalestris take the same route, and enjoyed her disappointment with ineffable satisfaction.

Thus favoured with a pretext, he took his leave of her, in a letter, giving her to understand, that he was no stranger to the barbarous snare she had laid for him; and upbraiding her with having made such an ungrateful return for all his tenderness and attachment. She was not backward in conveying a reply to this expostulation, which seemed to have been dictated in all the distraction of a proud woman who sees her vengeance baffled, as well as her love disdained. Her letter was nothing but a succession of reproaches, menaces, and incoherent execrations. She taxed him with knavery, insensibility, and dissimulation; imprecated a thousand curses upon his head, and threatened not only to persecute his life with all the arts that hell and malice could inspire, but also to wound him in the person of her daughter-in-law, who should be enclosed for life in a convent, where she should have leisure to repent of those loose and disorderly practices which he had taught her to commit, and of which she could not pretend

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innocence, as they had it in their power to confront her with the evidence of her lover's own confession. Yet all this denunciation was qualified with an alternative, by which he was given to understand, that the gates of mercy were still open, and that penitence was capable of washing out the deepest stain of guilt.

Ferdinand read the whole remonstrance with great composure and moderation, and was content to incur the hazard of her hate, rather than put her to the trouble of making such an effort of generosity, as would induce her to forgive the heinous offence he had committed; nor did his apprehension for Wilhelmina in the least influence his behaviour on this occasion. So zealous was he for her spiritual concerns, that he would have been glad to hear she had actually taken the veil; but he knew such a step was not at all agreeable to her disposition, and that no violence would be offered to her inclinations on that score, unless her stepmother should communicate to the father that letter of Fathom's which she had intercepted, and by which the German would be convinced of his daughter's backsliding; but this measure, he rightly supposed, the wife would not venture to take, lest the husband, instead of taking her advice touching the young lady, should seek to compromise the affair, by offering her in marriage to her debaucher, a proffer which, if accepted, would overwhelm the mother with vexation and despair. He therefore chose to trust to the effects of lenient time, which he hoped would gradually weaken the resentment of this Penthesilea, and dissolve his con-

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nexion with the other parts of the family, from which he longed to be totally detached.

How well soever he might have succeeded in his attempts to shake off the yoke of the mother, who by her situation in life was restrained from prosecuting those measures her resentment had planned against his fortitude and indifference, he would have found greater difficulty than he had foreseen, in disengaging himself from the daughter, whose affections he had won under the most solemn professions of honour and fidelity, and who, now she was debarred of his company and conversation, and in danger of losing him for ever, had actually taken the resolution of disclosing the amour to her father, that he might interpose in behalf of her peace and reputation, and secure her happiness by the sanction of the church.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

OUR HERO DEPARTS FROM VIENNA, AND QUITS THE DOMAIN OF VENUS FOR THE ROUGH FIELD OF MARS.

LUCKILY for our adventurer, before [s]he adhered to this determination, the young Count de Melvil was summoned to Presburg by his father, who desired to see him, before he should take the field, in consequence of a rupture between the Emperor and the French King; and Fathom of course quitted Vienna, in order to attend his patron, after he and Renaldo had resided two whole years in that capital, where the former had made himself perfect in all the polite exercises, become master of the French tongue, and learned to speak the Italian with great facility; over and above those other accomplishments in which we have represented him as an inimitable original.

As for the young Count, his exteriors were so much improved by the company to which he had access, since his departure from his father's house, that his parents were equally surprised and overjoyed at the alteration. All that awkwardness and rusticity, which hung upon his deportment, was, like the rough coat of a diamond, polished away; the connexion and disposition of his limbs seemed to

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have been adjusted anew; his carriage was become easy, his air perfectly genteel, and his conversation gay and unrestrained. The merit of this reformation was in a great measure ascribed to the care and example of Mr. Fathom, who was received by the old Count and his lady with marks of singular friendship and esteem; nor was he overlooked by Mademoiselle, who still remained in a state of celibacy, and seemed to have resigned all hope of altering her condition; she expressed uncommon satisfaction at the return of her old favourite, and readmitted him into the same degree of familiarity with which he had been honoured before his departure.

The joy of Teresa was so excessive at his arrival, that she could scarce suppress her raptures, so as to conceal them from the notice of the family; and our hero, upon this occasion, performed the part of an exquisite actor, in dissembling those transports which his bosom never knew. So well had this pupil retained the lessons of her instructor, that, in the midst of those fraudulent appropriations, which she still continued to make, she had found means to support her interest and character with Mademoiselle, and even to acquire such influence in the family, that no other servant, male or female, could pretend to live under the same roof, without paying incessant homage to this artful waiting-woman, and yielding the most abject submission to her will.

The young gentlemen having tarried at Presburg about six weeks, during which a small field equipage was prepared for Renaldo, they repaired to the camp at Heilbron, under the auspices of Count Melvil, in

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whose regiment they carried arms as volunteers, with a view to merit promotion in the service by their own personal behaviour. Our adventurer would have willingly dispensed with this occasion of signalising himself, his talents being much better adapted to another sphere of life; nevertheless, he affected uncommon alacrity at the prospect of gathering laurels in the field, and subscribed to his fortune with a good grace; foreseeing, that even in a campaign, a man of his art and ingenuity might find means to consult his corporal safety, without any danger to his reputation. Accordingly, before he had lived full three weeks in camp, the damp situation, and sudden change in his way of life, had such a violent effect upon his constitution, that he was deprived of the use of all his limbs, and mourned, without ceasing, his hard fate, by which he found himself precluded from all opportunity of exerting his diligence, courage, and activity, in the character of a soldier, to which he now aspired.

Renaldo, who was actually enamoured of a martial life, and missed no occasion of distinguishing himself, consoled his companion with great cordiality, encouraged him with the hope of seeing his constitution familiarised to the inconveniences of a camp, and accommodated him with everything which he thought would alleviate the pain of his body, as well as the anxiety of his mind. The old Count, who sincerely sympathised with his affliction, would have persuaded him to retire into quarters, where he could be carefully nursed, and provided with everything necessary to a person in his condition; but such was his desire

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of glory, that he resisted his patron's importunities with great constancy, till at length, seeing the old gentleman obstinately determined to consult his health by removing him from the field, he gradually suffered himself to recover the use of his hands, made shift to sit up in his bed, and amuse himself with cards or backgammon, and, notwithstanding the feeble condition of his legs, ventured to ride out on horseback to visit the lines, though the Count and his son would never yield to his solicitations so far, as to let him accompany Renaldo in those excursions and reconnoitring parties, by which a volunteer inures himself to toil and peril, and acquires that knowledge in the operations of war, which qualifies him for a command in the service.

Notwithstanding this exemption from all duty, our adventurer managed matters so as to pass for a youth of infinite mettle, and even rendered his backwardness and timidity subservient to the support of that character, by expressing an impatience of lying inactive, and a desire of signalising his prowess, which even the disabled condition of his body could scarce restrain. He must be a man of very weak nerves and excessive irresolution, who can live in the midst of actual service, without imbibing some portion of military fortitude: danger becomes habitual, and loses a great part of its terror; and as fear is often caught by contagion, so is courage communicated among the individuals of an army. The hope of fame, desire of honours and preferment, envy, emulation, and the dread of disgrace, are motives which co-operate in suppressing that aversion to death or

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mutilation, which nature hath implanted in the human mind; and therefore it is not to be wondered at, if Fathom, who was naturally chicken-hearted, gained some advantages over his disposition before the end of the campaign, which happened to be neither perilous nor severe.

During the winter, while both armies remained in quarters, our adventurer attended his patron to Presburg, and, before the troops were in motion, Renaldo obtained a commission, in consequence of which he went into garrison at Philipsburg, whither he was followed by our hero, while the old Count's duty called him to the field in a different place. Ferdinand for some time had no reason to be dissatisfied with this disposition, by which he was at once delivered from the fatigues of a campaign, and the inspection of a severe censor, in the person of Count Melvil; and his satisfaction was still increased by an accidental meeting with the Tyrolese who had been his confederate at Vienna, and now chanced to serve in garrison on the same footing with himself. These two knights-errant renewed their former correspondence, and, as all soldiers are addicted to gaming, levied contributions upon all those officers who had money to lose, and temerity to play.

However, they had not long pursued this branch of traffic, when their success was interrupted by a very serious occurrence, that for the present entirely detached the gentlemen in the garrison from such amusements. The French troops invested Fort Kehl, situated on the Rhine, opposite to Strasburg; and the Imperialists, dreading that the next storm would

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fall upon Philipsburg, employed themselves with great diligence to put that important fortress in a proper posture of defence. If the suspension of play was displeasing to our hero, the expectation of being besieged was by no means more agreeable. He knew the excellence of the French engineers, the power of their artillery, and the perseverance of their general. He felt, by anticipation, the toils of hard duty upon the works, the horrors of night-alarms, cannonading, bombardment, sallies, and mines blown up; and deliberated with himself whether or not he should privately withdraw, and take refuge among the besiegers; but, when he reflected that such a step, besides the infamy that must attend it, would be like that of running upon Scylla, seeking to avoid Charybdis, as he would be exposed to more danger and inconvenience in the trenches than he could possibly undergo in the town, and after all run the risk of being taken and treated as a deserter; upon these considerations he resolved to submit himself to his destiny, and endeavoured to mitigate the rigour of his fate by those arts he had formerly practised with success. He accordingly found means to enjoy a very bad state of health during the whole siege, which lasted about six weeks after the trenches were opened; and then the garrison marched out by capitulation, with all the honours of war.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

HE PUTS HIMSELF UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF HIS ASSOCIATE, AND STUMBLES UPON THE FRENCH CAMP, WHERE HE FINISHES HIS MILITARY CAREER.

NOTHING else of moment was transacted during that campaign; and in the winter our adventurer, with the young Count, and his friend the Tyrolese, were disposed in quarters of cantonment, where Ferdinand made himself amends for the chagrin he had undergone, by the exercise of those talents in which he excelled. Not that he was satisfied with the sphere of life in which he acted; though he knew himself consummate in the art of play, he was not at all ambitious of a gamester's name; nor did he find himself disposed to hazard those discoveries and explanations to which heroes of that class are sometimes necessarily exposed. His aim was to dwell among the tents of civil life, undisturbed by quarrels and the din of war, and render mankind subservient to his interest, not by stratagems which irritate, but by that suppleness of insinuation, which could not fail to soothe the temper of those on whom he meant to prey.

He saw that all his expectations of Count Melvil's future favour were connected with his choice of a

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military life; and that his promotion in the service would, in a great measure, depend upon his personal behaviour in such emergencies as he did not at all wish to encounter. On the other hand, he confided so much in his own dexterity and address, that he never doubted of being able to rear a splendid fortune for himself, provided he could once obtain a fixed and firm foundation. He had in fancy often enjoyed a prospect of England, not only as his native country, to which, like a true citizen, he longed to be united; but also as the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey, and abounding with subjects on which he knew his talents would be properly exercised.

These reflections never occurred, without leaving a strong impression upon the mind of our adventurer, which influenced his deliberations in such a manner, as at length amounted to a perfect resolution of withdrawing himself privately from a service that teemed with disagreeable events, and of transporting himself into the country of his ancestors, which he considered as the Canaan of all able adventurers. But, previous to his appearance on that stage, he was desirous of visiting the metropolis of France, in which he hoped to improve himself in the knowledge of men and things, and acquire such intelligence as would qualify him to act a more important part upon the British scene. After having for some time indulged these prospects in secret, he determined to accommodate himself with the company and experience of the Tyrolese, whom, under the specious title of an associate, he knew he could con-

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vert into a very serviceable tool, in forwarding the execution of his own projects.

Accordingly, the inclination of this confederate was sounded by distant hints, and being found apt, our hero made him privy to his design of decamping without beat of drum; though, at the same time, he begged his advice touching the method of their departure, that he might retire with as much delicacy as the nature of such a step would permit. Divers consultations were held upon this subject, before they adhered to the resolution of making their escape from the army, after it should have taken the field in the spring; because, in that case, they would have frequent opportunities of going abroad on foraging parties, and, during one of these excursions, might retire in such a manner as to persuade their companions that they had fallen into the enemy's hands.

Agreeable to this determination, the camp was no sooner formed in Alsace than our associates began to make preparations for their march, and had already taken all the previous measures for their departure, when an accident happened, which our hero did not fail to convert to his own advantage. This was no other than the desertion of Renaldo's valet, who, in consequence of a gentle chastisement, which he had richly merited, thought proper to disappear, after having plundered his master's portmanteau, which he had forced open for the purpose. Ferdinand, who was the first person that discovered the theft, immediately comprehended the whole adventure, and, taking it for granted that the delinquent would

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never return, resolved to finish what the fugitive had imperfectly performed.

Being favoured with the unreserved confidence of the young Count, he instantly had recourse to his bureau, the locks of which he found means to burst open, and, examining a private drawer, contrived with great art to conceal Renaldo's jewels and cash, made himself master of the contents without hesitation; then cutting open his cloak-bag, and strewing the tent with his linen and clothes, began to raise his voice, and produce such a clamour as alarmed the whole neighbourhood, and brought a great many officers into the tent.

He on this, as on all other occasions, performed his cue to a miracle, expressing confusion and concern so naturally in his gestures and exclamation, that no man could possibly suspect his sincerity; nay, to such a degree of finesse did his cunning amount, that when his friend and patron entered, in consequence of an intimation he soon received of his loss, our adventurer exhibited undoubted signs of distraction and delirium, and, springing upon Renaldo with all the frantic fury of a bedlamite, "Villain," cried he, "restore the effects you have stole from your master, or you shall be immediately committed to the care of the prevôt." However mortified M. de Melvil might be at his own misfortune, the condition of his friend seemed to touch him more nearly; he undervalued his own loss as a trifle that could be easily repaired; said everything which he thought would tend to soothe and compose the agitation of Ferdinand; and finally prevailed

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upon him to retire to rest. The calamity was wholly attributed to the deserter; and Renaldo, far from suspecting the true author, took occasion, from his behaviour on this emergency, to admire him as a mirror of integrity and attachment; in such an exquisite manner did he plan all his designs, that almost every instance of his fraud furnished matter of triumph to his reputation.

Having thus profitably exercised his genius, this subtle politician thought it high time to relinquish his military expectations, and securing all his valuable acquisitions about his own person, rode out with his understrapper, in the midst of fifty dragoons, who went in quest of forage. While the troopers were employed in making up their trusses, the two adventurers advanced towards the skirt of a wood, on pretence of reconnoitring, and the Tyrolese, who undertook to be our hero's guide, directing him to a path which leads towards Strasburg, they suddenly vanished from the eyes of their companions, who in a few minutes hearing the report of several pistols, which the confederates purposely fired, conjectured that they had fallen in with a party of French, by whom they were made prisoners of war.

The Tyrolese had overrated his own knowledge when he took upon himself the charge of conducting our hero; for upon their arrival at a certain place, where two roads crossed each other, he chanced to follow that which not only frustrated their intention, but even led them directly to the French camp; so that, in the twilight, they fell in upon one of the outguards before they were aware of their mistake.

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Whatever confusion and perplexity they might undergo, when they heard themselves questioned by the sentinel on the advanced post, certain it is, they betrayed no symptoms of fear or disorder; but while Ferdinand endeavoured to recollect himself, his fellow-traveller, with the appearance of admirable intrepidity and presence of mind, told the soldier that he and his companion were two gentlemen of family, who had quitted the Austrian army, on account of having sustained some ill-usage, which they had no opportunity of resenting in any other way, and that they were come to offer their services to the French general, to whose quarters they desired to be immediately conveyed.

The sentinel, to whom such an instance of desertion was neither rare, nor indeed uncommon, directed them without scruple to the next post, where they found a serjeant's party, from which, at their request, they were transmitted to the officer of the grand guard, and by him next morning introduced to Count Coigny, who very politely received them as volunteers in the army of France. Though this translation was not at all to our hero's liking, he was forced to acquiesce in his fate, glad to find himself, on these terms, in possession of his effects, of which he would otherwise have been infallibly rifled.

This campaign, however, was the most disagreeable period of his whole life; because the manner in which he had entered into the service subjected him to the particular observation and notice of the French officers; so that he was obliged to be very alert in his duty, and summon all his fortitude to maintain the

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character he had assumed. What rendered his situation still more unpalatable, was the activity of both armies in the course of this season, during which, over and above sundry fatiguing marches and countermarches, he was personally engaged in the affair of Halleh, which was very obstinate; where, being in the skirts of the detachment, he was actually wounded in the face by the sword of an hussar; but this was, luckily for him, the last time he found himself under the necessity of exerting his military prowess, for a cessation of arms was proclaimed before he was cured of his wound, and peace concluded about the end of the campaign.

During his sojourn in the French camp, he assumed the character of a man of family, who being disgusted at some supercilious treatment he had met with in the German service, and at the same time ambitious of carrying arms under the banners of France, took the opportunity of retreating by stealth from his friends, accompanied only by one with whom he could intrust his intention. In this capacity he had managed his matters to such advantage, that many French officers of rank were very well disposed to contribute their interest in his behalf, had his inclination verged towards promotion in the army; but he thought proper to conceal his real design, under the specious pretext of longing to see the metropolis of France, that centre of pleasure and politeness, in which he proposed to spend some time for the improvement of his address and understanding. These were motives too laudable to be opposed by his new patrons, some of whom furnished him with letters of recom-

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mendation to certain noblemen of the first rank at the court of Versailles, for which place he and his companion set out from the banks of the Rhine, very well satisfied with the honourable dismission they had obtained from a life of inconvenience, danger, and alarm.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

HE PREPARES A STRATAGEM BUT FINDS HIMSELF COUNTERMINED — PROCEEDS ON HIS JOURNEY, AND IS OVERTAKEN BY A TERRIBLE TEMPEST.

IN the course of this journey, Ferdinand, who was never deficient in his political capacity, held a secret conclave with his own thoughts, not only touching the plan of his own future conduct, but also concerning his associate, of whose fidelity and adherence he began to entertain such doubts as discouraged him from the prosecution of that design in which the Tyrolese had been at first included; for he had lately observed him practise the arts of his occupation among the French officers, with such rapacity and want of caution, as indicated a dangerous temerity of temper, as well as a furious rage of acquiring, which might be some time or other satiated upon his own friends. In other words, our adventurer was afraid that his accomplice would profit by his knowledge of the road and countries through which they travelled, and, after having made free with his most valuable effects, in consequence of the familiarity subsisting between them, leave him some morning without the ceremony of a formal adieu.

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Aroused by this suspicion, he resolved to anticipate the supposed intention of the Tyrolese, by taking his own departure in the same abrupt manner; and this scheme he actually put in execution, upon their arrival in Bar-le-duc, where it was agreed they should spend a day to repose and refresh themselves from the fatigue of hard riding. Ferdinand, therefore, taking the advantage of his companion's absence — for the Tyrolese had walked abroad to view the town — found means to hire a peasant, who undertook to conduct him through a by-road as far as Chalons, and with his guide he accordingly set out on horseback, after having discharged the bill, left a blank paper sealed up in form of a letter, directed to his friend, and secured behind his own saddle a pair of leathern bags, in which his jewels and cash were usually contained. So eager was our hero to leave the Tyrolese at a considerable distance behind, that he rode all night at a round pace without halting, and next morning found himself at a village distant thirteen good leagues from any part of the route which he and his companion had at first resolved to pursue.

Here, thinking himself safely delivered from the cause of all his apprehension, he determined to lie incognito for a few days, so as that he might run no risk of an accidental meeting upon the road with the person whose company he had forsaken; and accordingly took possession of an apartment, in which he went to rest, desiring his guide to wake him when dinner should be ready. Having enjoyed a very comfortable refreshment of sleep, with his bags under his

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pillow, he was summoned, according to his direction, and ate a very hearty meal, with great tranquillity and internal satisfaction. In the afternoon he amused himself with happy presages and ideal prospects of his future fortune, and, in the midst of these imaginary banquets, was seized with an inclination of realising his bliss, and regaling his eyesight with the fruits of that success which had hitherto attended his endeavours. Thus inflamed, he opened the repository, and, O reader! what were his reflections, when, in lieu of Mademoiselle Melvil's ear-rings and necklace, the German's golden chain, divers jewels of considerable value, the spoils of sundry dupes, and about two hundred ducats in ready money, he found neither more nor less than a parcel of rusty nails, disposed in such a manner as to resemble in weight and bulk the moveables he had lost.

It is not to be supposed our adventurer made this discovery without emotion. If the eternal salvation of mankind could have been purchased for the tenth part of his treasure, he would have left the whole species in a state of reprobation, rather than redeem them at that price, unless he had seen in the bargain some evident advantage to his own concerns. One may, therefore, easily conceive with what milkiness of resignation he bore the loss of the whole, and saw himself reduced from such affluence to the necessity of depending upon about twenty ducats, and some loose silver, which he carried in his pocket, for his expense upon the road. However bitter this pill might be in swallowing, he so far mastered his mortification, as to digest it with a good grace. His

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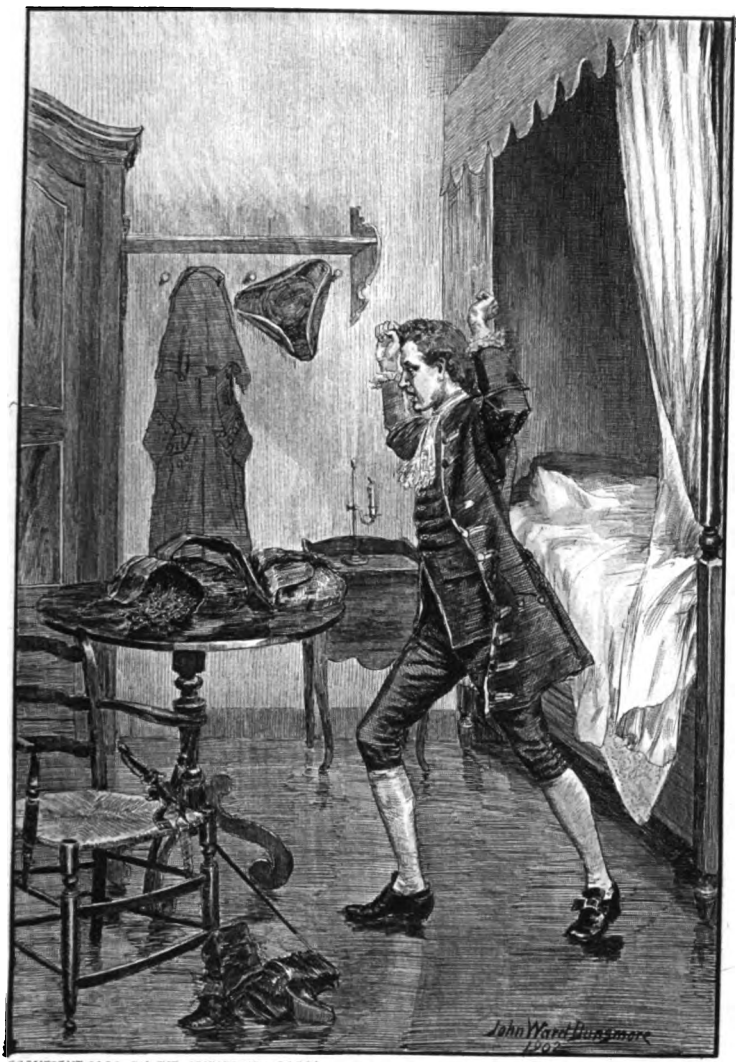
own penetration at once pointed out the canal through which this misfortune had flowed upon him; he forthwith placed the calamity to the account of the Tyrolese, and never doubting that he had retired with the booty across the Rhine, into some place to which he knew Fathom would not follow his footsteps, he formed the melancholy resolution of pursuing with all despatch his journey to Paris, that he might, with all convenient expedition, indemnify himself for the discomfiture he had sustained.

With regard to his confederate, his conjecture was perfectly right; that adventurer, though infinitely inferior to our hero in point of genius and invention, had manifestly the advantage of him in the articles of age and experience; he was no stranger to Fathom's qualifications, the happy exertion of which he had often seen. He knew him to be an economist of the most frugal order, consequently concluded his finances were worthy of examination; and, upon the true principles of a sharper, eased him of the encumbrance, taking it for granted, that, in so doing, he only precluded Ferdinand from the power of acting the same tragedy upon him, should ever opportunity concur with his inclination. He had therefore concerted his measures with the dexterity of an experienced conveyancer, and, snatching the occasion, while our hero, travel-tainted, lay sunk in the arms of profound repose, he ripped up the seams of the leather depository, and, the golden contents, introduced the parcel of [illegible] which he had made up for the purpose, and [illegible] the breach with great deliberation.

Had Fathom's good genius prompted him to exam-



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ine his effects next morning, the Tyrolese, in all probability, would have maintained his acquisition by force of arms; for his personal courage was rather more determined than that of our adventurer, and he was conscious of his own ascendency in this particular; but his good fortune prevented such explanation. Immediately after dinner, he availed himself of his knowledge, and, betaking himself to a remote part of the town, set out in a post-chaise for Luneville, while our hero was meditating his own escape.

Fathom's conception was sufficient to comprehend the whole of this adventure, as soon as his chagrin would give his sagacity fair play; nor would he allow his resolution to sink under the trial; on the contrary, he departed from the village that same afternoon, under the auspices of his conductor, and found himself benighted in the midst of a forest, far from the habitations of men. The darkness of the night, the silence and solitude of the place, the indistinct images of the trees that appeared on every side, "stretching their extravagant arms athwart the gloom," conspired, with the dejection of spirits occasioned by his loss, to disturb his fancy, and raise strange phantoms in his imagination. Although he was not naturally superstitious, his mind began to be invaded with an awful horror, that gradually prevailed over all the consolations of reason and philosophy; nor was his heart free from the terrors of assassination. In order to dissipate these disagreeable reveries, he had recourse to the conversation of his guide, by whom he was entertained with the history of divers travellers who had been robbed and

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murdered by ruffians, whose retreat was in the recesses of that very wood.

In the midst of this communication, which did not at all tend to the elevation of our hero's spirits, the conductor made an excuse for dropping behind, while our traveller jogged on in expectation of being joined again by him in a few minutes. He was, however, disappointed in that hope; the sound of the other horse's feet by degrees grew more and more faint, and at last altogether died away. Alarmed at this circumstance, Fathom halted in the middle of the road, and listened with the most fearful attention; but his sense of hearing was saluted with nought but the dismal sighings of the trees, that seemed to foretell an approaching storm. Accordingly, the heavens contracted a more dreary aspect, the lightning began to gleam, and the thunder to roll, and the tempest, raising its voice to a tremendous roar, descended in a torrent of rain.

In this emergency, the fortitude of our hero was almost quite overcome. So many concurring circumstances of danger and distress might have appalled the most undaunted breast; what impression then must they have made upon the mind of Ferdinand, who was by no means a man to set fear at defiance! Indeed, he had well-nigh lost the use of his reflection, and was actually invaded to the skin, before he could recollect himself so far as to quit the road, and seek for shelter among the thickets that surrounded him. Having rode some furlongs into the forest, he took his station under a tuft of tall trees, that screened him from the storm, and in that situation called a

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council within himself, to deliberate upon his next excursion. He persuaded himself that his guide had deserted him for the present, in order to give intelligence of a traveller to some gang of robbers with whom he was connected; and that he must of necessity fall a prey to those banditti, unless he should have the good fortune to elude their search, and disentangle himself from the mazes of the wood.

Harrowed with these apprehensions, he resolved to commit himself to the mercy of the hurricane, as of two evils the least, and penetrate straightforwards through some devious opening, until he should be delivered from the forest. For this purpose he turned his horse's head in a line quite contrary to the direction of the high road which he had left, on the supposition that the robbers would pursue that track in quest of him, and that they would never dream of his deserting the highway, to traverse an unknown forest, amidst the darkness of such a boisterous night. After he had continued in this progress through a succession of groves, and bogs, and thorns, and brakes, by which not only his clothes, but also his skin suffered in a grievous manner, while every nerve quivered with eagerness and dismay, he at length reached an open plain, and pursuing his course, in full hope of arriving at some village, where his life would be safe, he descried a rush-light at a distance, which he looked upon as the star of his good fortune, and riding towards it at full speed, arrived at the door of a lone cottage, into which he was admitted by an old woman, who, understanding he was a bewildered traveller, received him with great hospitality.

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When he learned from his hostess, that there was not another house within three leagues; that she could accommodate him with a tolerable bed, and his horse with lodging and oats, he thanked Heaven for his good fortune, in stumbling upon this homely habitation, and determined to pass the night under the protection of the old cottager, who gave him to understand, that her husband, who was a faggot-maker, had gone to the next town to dispose of his merchandise; and that, in all probability, he would not return till next morning, on account of the tempestuous night. Ferdinand sounded the beldame with a thousand artful interrogations, and she answered with such appearance of truth and simplicity, that he concluded his person was quite secure; and, after having been regaled with a dish of eggs and bacon, desired she would conduct him into the chamber where she proposed he should take his repose. He was accordingly ushered up by a sort of ladder into an apartment furnished with a standing-bed, and almost half filled with trusses of straw. He seemed extremely well pleased with his lodging, which in reality exceeded his expectation; and his kind landlady, cautioning him against letting the candle approach the combustibles, took her leave, and locked the door on the outside.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

HE FALLS UPON SCYLLA, SEEKING TO AVOID CHARYBDIS.

FATHOM, whose own principles taught him to be suspicious, and ever upon his guard against the treachery of his fellow-creatures, could have dispensed with this instance of her care, in confining her guest to her chamber, and began to be seized with strange fancies, when he observed that there was no bolt on the inside of the door, by which he might secure himself from intrusion. In consequence of these suggestions, he proposed to take an accurate survey of every object in the apartment, and, in the course of his inquiry, had the mortification to find the dead body of a man, still warm, who had been lately stabbed, and concealed beneath several bundles of straw.

Such a discovery could not fail to fill the breast of our hero with unspeakable horror; for he concluded that he himself would undergo the same fate before morning, without the interposition of a miracle in his favour. In the first transports of his dread, he ran to the window, with a view to escape by that outlet, and found his flight effectually obstructed by divers strong bars of iron. Then his

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heart began to palpitate, his hair to bristle up, and his knees to totter; his thoughts teemed with presages of death and destruction; his conscience rose up in judgment against him, and he underwent a severe paroxysm of dismay and distraction. His spirits were agitated into a state of fermentation that produced a species of resolution akin to that which is inspired by brandy or other strong liquors, and, by an impulse that seemed supernatural, he was immediately hurried into measures for his own preservation.

What upon a less interesting occasion his imagination durst not propose, he now executed without scruple or remorse. He undressed the corpse that lay bleeding among the straw, and, conveying it to the bed in his arms, deposited it in the attitude of a person who sleeps at his ease; then he extinguished the light, took possession of the place from whence the body had been removed, and, holding a pistol ready cocked in each hand, waited for the sequel with that determined purpose which is often the immediate production of despair. About midnight he heard the sound of feet ascending the ladder; the door was softly opened; he saw the shadow of two men stalking towards the bed, a dark lanthorn being unshrouded, directed their aim to the supposed sleeper, and he that held it thrust a poniard to his heart; the force of the blow made a compression on the chest, and a sort of groan issued from the windpipe of the defunct; the stroke was repeated, without producing a repetition of the note, so that the assassins concluded the work was effectually done, and

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retired for the present with a design to return and rifle the deceased at their leisure.

Never had our hero spent a moment in such agony as he felt during this operation; the whole surface of his body was covered with a cold sweat, and his nerves were relaxed with an universal palsy. In short, he remained in a trance that, in all probability, contributed to his safety; for, had he retained the use of his senses, he might have been discovered by the transports of his fear. The first use he made of his retrieved recollection, was to perceive that the assassins had left the door open in their retreat; and he would have instantly availed himself of this their neglect, by sallying out upon them, at the hazard of his life, had he not been restrained by a conversation he overheard in the room below, importing, that the ruffians were going to set out upon another expedition, in hopes of finding more prey. They accordingly departed, after having laid strong injunctions upon the old woman to keep the door fast locked during their absence; and Ferdinand took his resolution without farther delay. So soon as, by his conjecture, the robbers were at a sufficient distance from the house, he rose from his lurking-place, moved softly towards the bed, and, rummaging the pockets of the deceased, found a purse well stored with ducats, of which, together with a silver watch and a diamond ring, he immediately possessed himself without scruple; then, descending with great care and circumspection into the lower apartment, stood before the old beldame, before she had the least intimation of his approach.

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Accustomed as she was to the trade of blood, the hoary hag did not behold this apparition without giving signs of infinite terror and astonishment, believing it was no other than the spirit of her second guest, who had been murdered; she fell upon her knees and began to recommend herself to the protection of the saints, crossing herself with as much devotion as if she had been entitled to the particular care and attention of Heaven. Nor did her anxiety abate, when she was undeceived in this her supposition, and understood it was no phantom, but the real substance of the stranger, who, without staying to upbraid her with the enormity of her crimes, commanded her, on pain of immediate death, to produce his horse, to which being conducted, he set her upon the saddle without delay, and, mounting behind, invested her with the management of the reins, swearing, in a most peremptory tone, that the only chance she had for her life, was in directing him safely to the next town; and that, so soon as she should give him the least cause to doubt her fidelity in the performance of that task, he would on the instant act the part of her executioner.

This declaration had its effect upon the withered Hecate, who, with many supplications for mercy and forgiveness, promised to guide him in safety to a certain village at the distance of two leagues, where he might lodge in security, and be provided with a fresh horse, or other convenience, for pursuing his intended route. On these conditions he told her she might deserve his clemency; and they accordingly took their departure together, she being placed

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astride upon the saddle, holding the bridle in one hand and a switch in the other; and our adventurer sitting on the crupper, superintending her conduct, and keeping the muzzle of a pistol close at her ear. In this equipage they travelled across part of the same wood in which his guide had forsaken him; and it is not to be supposed that he passed his time in the most agreeable reverie, while he found himself involved in the labyrinth of those shades, which he considered as the haunts of robbery and assassination.

Common fear was a comfortable sensation to what he felt in this excursion. The first steps he had taken for his preservation were the effects of mere instinct, while his faculties were extinguished or suppressed by despair; but now, as his reflection began to recur, he was haunted by the most intolerable apprehensions. Every whisper of the wind through the thickets was swelled into the hoarse menaces of murder, the shaking of the boughs was construed into the brandishing of poniards, and every shadow of a tree became the apparition of a ruffian eager for blood. In short, at each of these occurrences he felt what was infinitely more tormenting than the stab of a real dagger; and at every fresh fillip of his fear, he acted as a remembrancer to his conductress, in a new volley of imprecations, importing, that her life was absolutely connected with his opinion of his own safety.

Human nature could not longer subsist under such complicated terror. At last he found himself clear of the forest, and was blessed with the distant view of an inhabited place. He then began to exercise

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his thoughts upon a new subject. He debated with himself, whether he should make a parade of his intrepidity and public spirit, by disclosing his achievement, and surrendering his guide to the penalty of the law; or leave the old hag and her accomplices to the remorse of their own consciences, and proceed quietly on his journey to Paris in undisturbed possession of the prize he had already obtained. This last step he determined to take, upon recollecting, that, in the course of his information, the story of the murdered stranger would infallibly attract the attention of justice, and, in that case, the effects he had borrowed from the defunct must be refunded for the benefit of those who had a right to the succession. This was an argument which our adventurer could not resist; he foresaw that he should be stripped of his acquisition, which he looked upon as the fair fruits of his valour and sagacity; and, moreover, be detained as an evidence against the robbers, to the manifest detriment of his affairs. Perhaps too he had motives of conscience, that dissuaded him from bearing witness against a set of people whose principles did not much differ from his own.

Influenced by such considerations, he yielded to the first importunity of the beldame, whom he dismissed at a very small distance from the village, after he had earnestly exhorted her to quit such an atrocious course of life, and atone for her past crimes, by sacrificing her associates to the demands of justice. She did not fail to vow a perfect reformation, and to prostrate herself before him for the favour

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she had found ; then she betook herself to her habitation, with full purpose of advising her fellow-murderers to repair with all despatch to the village, and impeach our hero, who, wisely distrusting her professions, stayed no longer in the place than to hire a guide for the next stage, which brought him to the city of Chalons-sur-Marne.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

HE ARRIVES AT PARIS, AND IS PLEASED WITH HIS RECEPTION.

HE was not so smitten with the delightful situation of this ancient town, but that he abandoned it as soon as he could procure a post-chaise, in which he arrived at Paris, without having been exposed to any other troublesome adventure upon the road. He took lodgings at a certain hotel in the Fauxbourg de St. Germain, which is the general rendezvous of all the strangers that resort to this capital; and now sincerely congratulated himself upon his happy escape from his Hungarian connexions, and from the snares of the banditti, as well as upon the spoils of the dead body, and his arrival at Paris, from whence there was such a short conveyance to England, whither he was attracted, by far other motives than that of filial veneration for his native soil.

He suppressed all his letters of recommendation, which he justly concluded would subject him to a tedious course of attendance upon the great, and lay him under the necessity of soliciting preferment in the army, than which nothing was farther from his inclination; and resolved to make his appearance in the character of a private gentleman, which would

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supply him with opportunities of examining the different scenes of life in such a gay metropolis, so as that he should be able to choose that sphere in which he could move the most effectually to his own advantage. He accordingly hired an occasional domestic, and under the denomination of Count Fathom, which he had retained since his elopement from Renaldo, repaired to dinner at an ordinary, to which he was directed as a reputable place, frequented by fashionable strangers of all nations.

He found this piece of information perfectly just; for he no sooner entered the apartment, than his ears were saluted with a strange confusion of sounds, among which he at once distinguished the High and Low Dutch, barbarous French, Italian, and English languages. He was rejoiced at this occasion of displaying his own qualifications, took his place at one of the three long tables, betwixt a Westphalian count and a Bolognian marquis, insinuated himself into the conversation with his usual address, and in less than half an hour, found means to accost a native of each different country in his own mother-tongue.

Such extensive knowledge did not pass unobserved. A French abbé, in a provincial dialect, complimented him upon his retaining that purity in pronunciation, which is not to be found in the speech of a Parisian. The Bolognian, mistaking him for a Tuscan, "Sir," said he, "I presume you are from Florence. I hope the illustrious house of Lorrain leaves you gentlemen of that famous city no room to regret the loss of your own princes." The castle of Versailles becoming the subject of conversation, Monsieur le

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Compte appealed to him, as to a native German, whether it was not inferior in point of magnificence to the château of Grubenhagen. The Dutch officer, addressing himself to Fathom, drank to the prosperity of Faderland, and asked if he had not once served in garrison at Shenkenschans; and an English knight swore, with great assurance, that he had frequently rambled with him at midnight among the hundreds of Drury.

To each person he replied in a polite, though mysterious manner, which did not fail to enhance their opinion of his good breeding and importance; and, long before the dessert appeared, he was by all the company supposed to be a personage of great consequence, who for some substantial reasons, found it convenient to keep himself incognito. This being the case, it is not to be doubted that particular civilities were poured upon him from all quarters. He perceived their sentiments, and encouraged them, by behaving with that sort of complaisance which seems to be the result of engaging condescension in a character of superior dignity and station. His affability was general; but his chief attention limited to those gentlemen already mentioned, who chanced to sit nearest him at table; and he no sooner gave them to understand that he was an utter stranger in Paris, than they unanimously begged to have the honour of making him acquainted with the different curiosities peculiar to that metropolis.

He accepted of their hospitality, accompanied them to a coffee-house in the afternoon, from whence they repaired to the opera, and afterwards adjourned

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to a noted hotel, in order to spend the remaining part of the evening. It was here that our hero secured himself effectually in the footing he had gained in their good graces. He in a moment saw through all the characters of the party, and adapted himself to the humour of each individual, without descending from that elevation of behaviour which he perceived would operate among them in his behalf. With the Italian he discoursed on music, in the style of a connoisseur; and indeed had a better claim to that title than the generality of those upon whom it is usually conferred; for he understood the art in theory as well as in practice, and would have made no contemptible figure among the best performers of the age.

He harangued upon taste and genius to the abbé, who was a wit and critic, *ex officio*, or rather *ex vestitu*: for a young pert Frenchman, the very moment he puts on the petit collet, or little band, looks upon himself as an inspired son of Apollo; and every one of the fraternity thinks it incumbent upon him to assert the divinity of his mission. In a word, the abbés are a set of people that bear a strong analogy to the templars in London. Fools of each fabric, sharpers of all sorts, and dunces of every degree, profess themselves of both orders. The templar is, generally speaking, a prig, so is the abbé: both are distinguished by an air of petulance and self-conceit, which holds a middle rank betwixt the insolence of a first-rate buck and the learned pride of a supercilious pedant. The abbé is supposed to be a younger brother in quest of preferment in the church — the

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Temple is considered as a receptacle or seminary for younger sons intended for the bar; but a great number of each profession turn aside into other paths of life, long before they reach these proposed goals. An abbé is often metamorphosed into a foot soldier; a templar sometimes sinks into an attorney's clerk. The galleys of France abound with abbés; and many templars may be found in our American plantations; not to mention those who have made a public exit nearer home. Yet I would not have it thought that my description includes every individual of those societies. Some of the greatest scholars, politicians, and wits, that ever Europe produced, have worn the habit of an abbé; and many of our most noble families in England derive their honours from those who have studied law in the Temple. The worthy sons of every community shall always be sacred from my censure and ridicule; and, while I laugh at the folly of particular members, I can still honour and revere the institution.

But let us return from this comparison, which some readers may think impertinent and unseasonable, and observe, that the Westphalian count, Dutch officer, and English knight, were not excepted from the particular regard and attention of our adventurer. He pledged the German in every bumper; flattered the Hollander with compliments upon the industry, wealth, and policy of the Seven United Provinces; but he reserved his chief battery for his own countryman, on the supposition that he was, in all respects, the best adapted for the purposes of a needy gamester. Him, therefore, he cultivated with extraordi-

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nary care and singular observance; for he soon perceived him to be a humourist, and, from that circumstance, derived an happy presage of his own success. The baronet's disposition seemed to be cast in the true English mould. He was sour, silent, and contemptuous; his very looks indicated a consciousness of superior wealth; and he never opened his mouth, except to make some dry, sarcastic, national reflection. Nor was his behaviour free from that air of suspicion which a man puts on when he believes himself in a crowd of pick-pockets, whom his caution and vigilance set at defiance. In a word, though his tongue was silent on the subject, his whole demeanour was continually saying, "You are all a pack of poor lousy rascals, who have a design upon my purse. 'T is true, I could buy your whole generation, but I won't be bubbled, d' ye see; I am aware of your flattery, and upon my guard against all your knavish pranks; and I come into your company for my own amusement only."

Fathom having reconnoitred this peculiarity of temper, instead of treating him with that assiduous complaisance, which he received from the other gentlemen of the party, kept aloof from him in the conversation, with a remarkable shyness of distant civility, and seldom took notice of what he said, except with a view to contradict him, or retort some of his satirical observations. This he conceived to be the best method of acquiring his good opinion; because the Englishman would naturally conclude he was a person who could have no sinister views upon his fortune, else he would have chosen quite a

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different manner of deportment. Accordingly, the knight seemed to bite at the hook. He listened to Ferdinand with uncommon regard; he was even heard to commend his remarks, and at length drank to their better acquaintance.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

ACQUITS HIMSELF WITH ADDRESS IN A NOCTURNAL RIOT.

THE Italian and the abbé were the first who began to grow whimsical under the influence of the burgundy; and, in the heat of their elevation, proposed that the company should amuse themselves during the remaining part of the night, at the house of an obliging dame, who maintained a troop of fair nymphs for the accommodation of the other sex. The proposal was approved by all, except the Hollander, whose economy the wine had not as yet invaded; and, while he retreated soberly to his own lodgings, the rest of the society adjourned in two coaches to the temple of love, where they were received by the venerable priestess, a personage turned of seventy, who seemed to exercise the functions of her calling, in despite of the most cruel ravages of time; for age had bent her into the form of a Turkish bow. Her head was agitated by the palsy, like the leaf of the poplar tree; her hair fell down in scanty parcels, as white as the driven snow; her face was not simply wrinkled, but ploughed into innumerable furrows; her jaws could not boast of one remaining tooth; one eye distilled a large quantity of rheum, by virtue

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of the fiery edge that surrounded it; the other was altogether extinguished, and she had lost her nose in the course of her ministration. The Delphic sibyl was but a type of this hoary matron, who, by her figure, might have been mistaken for the consort of Chaos, or mother of Time. Yet there was something meritorious in her appearance, as it denoted her an indefatigable minister to the pleasure of mankind, and as it formed an agreeable contrast with the beauty and youth of the fair damsels that wantoned in her train. It resembled those discords in music, which, properly disposed, contribute to the harmony of the whole piece; or those horrible giants, who, in the world of romance, used to guard the gates of the castle in which the enchanted damsel was confined.

This Urganda seemed to be aware of her own importance, and perfectly well acquainted with the human appetite; for she compelled the whole company to undergo her embrace. Then a lacquey, in magnificent livery, ushered them into a superb apartment, where they waited some minutes, without being favoured with the appearance of the ladies, to the manifest dissatisfaction of the abbé, who, sending for the gouvernante, reprimanded her severely for her want of politesse. The old lady, who was by no means a pattern of patience and submission, retorted his reproaches with great emphasis and vivacity. Her eloquence flowed altogether in the Covent Garden strain; and I question whether the celebrated Mother Douglas herself could have made such a figure in an extemporaneous altercation.

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After having bestowed upon the abbé the epithets of saucy insignificant pimp, she put him in mind of the good offices which he had received at her hands; how she had supplied him with bed, board, and bedfellow, in his greatest necessity; sent him abroad with money in his pockets — and, in a word, cherished him in her bosom, when his own mother had abandoned him to distress. She then reviled him for presuming to affront her before strangers, and gave the company to understand, that the young ladies would wait upon them as soon as they could be confessed and receive absolution from a worthy cordelier, who was now employed in performing that charitable office. The gentlemen were satisfied with this remonstrance, which argued the old lady's pious concern for the souls that were under her care, and our adventurer proposed an accommodation betwixt her and the abbé, who was prevailed upon to ask her pardon, and received her blessing upon his knees.

This affair had not been long adjusted, when five damsels were introduced in a very gay dishabille, and our hero was complimented with the privilege of choosing his Amanda from the whole bevy. When he was provided, the others began to pair themselves, and, unhappily, the German count chanced to pitch upon the same nymph who had captivated the desires of the British knight. A dispute immediately ensued; for the Englishman made his addresses to the lady, without paying the least regard to the priority of the other's claim; and she, being pleased with his attachment, did not scruple to renounce his rival, who swore by the thunder,

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lightning, and sacrament, that he would not quit his pretensions for any prince in Christendom, much less for a little English cavalier, whom he had already honoured too much in condescending to be his companion.

The knight, provoked at this stately declaration, which was the immediate effect of anger and ebriety, eyed his antagonist with a most contemptuous aspect, and advised him to avoid such comparisons for the future. "We all know," said he, "the importance of a German count; I suppose your revenue amounts to three hundred rix-dollars; and you have a château that looks like the ruins of an English gaol. I will bind myself to lend you a thousand pounds upon a mortgage of your estate, (and a bad bargain I am sure I shall have,) if I do not, in less than two months, find a yeoman of Kent, who spends more in strong ale than the sum-total of your yearly income; and, were the truth known, I believe that lace upon your coat is no better than tinsel, and those fringed ruffles, with fine Holland sleeves, tacked to a shirt of brown canvas, so that, were you to undress yourself before the lady, you would only expose your own poverty and pride."

The count was so much enraged at these sarcastic observations, that his faculty of speech was overwhelmed by his resentment; though, in order to acquit himself of the Englishman's imputation, he forthwith pulled off his clothes with such fury, that his brocade waistcoat was tore from top to bottom. The knight, mistaking his meaning, considered this demeanour as a fair challenge, to try which was the better man in

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the exercise of boxing; and, on that supposition, began to strip in his turn, when he was undeceived by Fathom, who put the right interpretation upon the count's behaviour, and begged that the affair might be compromised. By this time the Westphalian recovered the use of his tongue, and with many threats and imprecations, desired they would take notice how falsely he had been aspersed, and do him justice in espousing his claim to the damsel in question.

Before the company had time or inclination to interest themselves in the quarrel, his opponent observed that no person who was not a mere German, would ever dream of forcing the inclinations of a pretty girl, whom the accidents of fortune had subjected to his power; that such compulsion was equivalent to the most cruel rape that could be committed; and that the lady's aversion was not at all surprising; for, to speak his own sentiments, were he a woman of pleasure, he would as soon grant favours to a Westphalian hog, as to the person of his antagonist. The German, enraged at this comparison, was quite abandoned by his patience and discretion. He called the knight an English clown, and, swearing he was the most untoward beast of a whole nation of mules, snatched up one of the candlesticks, which he launched at him with such force and violence, that it sung through the air, and, winging its flight into the ante-chamber, encountered the skull of his own valet, who with immediate prostration received the message of his master.

The knight, that he might not be behindhand

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with the Westphalian in point of courtesy, returned the compliment with the remaining chandelier, which also missed its mark, and, smiting a large mirror that was fixed behind them, emitted such a crash as one might expect to hear if a mine were sprung beneath a manufacture of glass. Both lights being thus extinguished, a furious combat ensued in the dark; the Italian scampered off with infinite agility, and, as he went downstairs, desired that nobody would interpose, because it was an affair of honour, which could not be made up. The ladies consulted their safety in flight; Count Fathom slyly retired to one corner of the room; while the abbé, having upon him the terrors of the commissaire, endeavoured to appease and part the combatants, and, in the attempt, sustained a random blow upon his nose, which sent him howling into the other chamber, where, finding his hand besmeared with his own blood, he began to caper about the apartment, in a transport of rage and vexation.

Meanwhile, the old gentlewoman being alarmed with the noise of the battle, and apprehensive that it would end in murder, to the danger and discredit of herself and family, immediately mustered up her myrmidons, of whom she always retained a formidable band, and, putting herself at their head, lighted them to the scene of uproar. Ferdinand, who had hitherto observed a strict neutrality, no sooner perceived them approach, than he leaped in between the disputants, that he might be found acting in the character of a peacemaker; and, indeed, by this time, victory had declared for the baronet, who had treated

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his antagonist with a cross-buttock, which laid him almost breathless on the floor. The victor was prevailed upon, by the entreaties of Fathom, to quit the field of battle, and adjourn into another room, where, in less than half an hour, he received a billet from the count, defying him to single combat on the frontiers of Flanders, at an appointed time and place. The challenge was immediately accepted by the knight, who, being flushed with conquest, treated his adversary with great contempt.

But, next day, when the fumes of the burgundy were quite exhaled, and the adventure recurred to his remembrance and sober reflection, he waited upon our adventurer at his lodgings, and solicited his advice in such a manner, as gave him to understand that he looked upon what had happened as a drunken brawl, which ought to have no serious consequences. Fathom foreseeing that the affair might be managed for his own interest, professed himself of the baronet's opinion; and, without hesitation, undertook the office of a mediator, assuring his principal, that his honour should suffer no stain in the course of his negotiation.

Having received the Englishman's acknowledgments for this instance of friendship, he forthwith set out for the place of the German's habitation, and understanding he was still asleep, insisted upon his being immediately waked, and told, that a gentleman from the chevalier desired to see him, upon business of importance which could not be delayed. Accordingly, his valet-de-chambre, pressed by Fathom's importunities and remonstrances, ventured to go in

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and shake the count by the shoulder; when this furious Teutonian, still agitated by the fever of the preceding night, leaped out of bed in a frenzy, and seizing his sword that lay upon a table, would have severely punished the presumption of his servant, had not he been restrained by the entrance of Ferdinand, who, with a peremptory countenance, gave him to understand that the valet had acted at his immediate instigation; and that he was come, as the Englishman's friend, to concert with him proper measures for keeping the appointment they had made at their last meeting.

This message effectually calmed the German, who was not a little mortified to find himself so disagreeably disturbed. He could not help cursing the impatience of his antagonist, and even hinting that he would have acted more like a gentleman and good Christian, in expressing a desire of seeing the affair accommodated, as he knew himself to be the aggressor, consequently the first offender against the laws of politeness and good-fellowship. Fathom, finding him in a fit temper of mind, took the opportunity of assenting to the reasonableness of his observation. He ventured to condemn the impetuosity of the baronet, who, he perceived, was extremely nice and scrupulous in the punctilios of honour; and said it was a pity that two gentlemen should forfeit each other's friendship, much less expose their lives, for such a frivolous cause. "My dear count," cried the Westphalian, "I am charmed to find your sentiments so conformable to my own. In an honourable cause, I despise all danger; my

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courage, thank Heaven! has been manifested in many public engagements as well as in private rencounters; but, to break with my friend, whose eminent virtues I admire, and even to seek his life, on such a scandalous occasion, for a little insignificant w—e, who, I suppose, took the advantage of our intoxication, to foment the quarrel: by Heaven! my conscience cannot digest it."

Having expressed himself to this purpose, he waited impatiently for the reply of Ferdinand, who, after a pause of deliberation, offered his services in the way of mediation; though, he observed, it was a matter of great delicacy, and the event altogether uncertain. "Nevertheless," added our adventurer, "I will strive to appease the knight, who, I hope, will be induced by my remonstrances to forget the unlucky accident, which hath so disagreeably interrupted your mutual friendship." The German thanked him for this proof of his regard, which yielded him more satisfaction on account of the chevalier than of himself. "For, by the tombs of my fathers," cried he, "I have so little concern for my personal safety, that, if my honour were interested, I durst oppose myself singly to the whole ban of the empire; and I am now ready, if the chevalier requires it, to give him the rendezvous in the forest of Senlis, either on horseback or on foot, where this contest may be terminated with the life of one or both of us."

Count Fathom, with a view to chastise the Westphalian for this rhodomontade, told him, with a mortifying air of indifference, that if they were both bent

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upon taking the field, he would save himself the trouble of interposing farther in the affair; and desired to know the hour at which it would suit him to take the air with the baronet. The other, not a little embarrassed by this question, said, with a faltering tongue, he should be proud to obey the chevalier's orders; but, at the same time, owned he should be much better pleased if our hero would execute the pacific proposal he had made. Fathom accordingly promised to exert himself for that purpose, and returned to the knight, with whom he assumed the merit of having tranquillised the rage of an incensed barbarian, who was now disposed to a reconciliation upon equal terms. The baronet overwhelmed him with caresses and compliments upon his friendship and address; the parties met that same forenoon, as if by accident, in Fathom's apartment, where they embraced each other cordially, exchanged apologies, and renewed their former correspondence.

Our adventurer thought he had good reason to congratulate himself upon the part he had acted in this pacification. He was treated by both with signal marks of particular affection and esteem. The count pressed him to accept, as a token of his attachment, a sword of very curious workmanship, which he had received in a present from a certain prince of the empire. The knight forced upon his finger a very splendid diamond ring, as a testimony of his gratitude and esteem. But there was still another person to be appeased, before the peace of the whole company could be established. This was no other than the

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abbé, from whom each of the reconciled friends received at dinner a billet couched in these words: —

"I have the honour to lament the infinite chagrin and mortification that compels me to address myself in this manner to a person of your rank and eminence, whom I should do myself the pleasure of waiting upon in person, were I not prevented by the misfortune of my nose, which was last night most cruelly disarranged, by a violent contusion I had the honour to receive, in attempting to compose that unhappy *fracas*, at the house of Madame la Maquerelle; and what puts the finishing stroke to my mishap, is my being rendered incapable of keeping three or four assignations with ladies of fashion, by whom I have the honour to be particularly esteemed. The disfiguration of my nose, the pain I have undergone, with the discomposure of brain which it produced, I could bear as a philosopher; but the disappointment of the ladies, my glory will not permit me to overlook. And as you know the injury was sustained in your service, I have the pleasure to hope you will not refuse to grant such reparation as will be acceptable to a gentleman, who has the honour to be with inviolable attachment, —

"Sir, your most devoted slave,

"Pepin Clothaire Charle Henri Louis Barnabe de Fumier."

This epistle was so equivocal, that the persons to whom it was addressed did not know whether or not they ought to interpret the contents into a challenge; when our hero observed, that the ambiguity of his expressions plainly proved there was a door left open for accommodation; and proposed that they should

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forthwith visit the writer at his own apartment. They accordingly followed his advice, and found the abbé in his morning gown and slippers, with three huge nightcaps on his head, and a crape hat-band tied over the middle of his face, by way of bandage to his nose. He received his visitors with the most ridiculous solemnity, being still a stranger to the purport of their errand; but soon as the Westphalian declared they were come in consequence of his billet, in order to ask pardon for the undesigned offence they had given, his features retrieved their natural vivacity, and he professed himself perfectly satisfied with their polite acknowledgment. Then they condoled him upon the evil plight of his nose, and seeing some marks upon his shirt, asked with seeming concern, if he had lost any blood in the fray? To this interrogation he replied, that he had still a sufficient quantity left for the occasions of his friends; and that he should deem it his greatest glory to expend the last drop of it in their service.

Matters being thus amicably adjusted, they prevailed upon him to uncase his nose, which retained no signs of the outrage he had suffered; and the amusements of the day were concerted. It was in consequence of this plan, that, after the comedy, they were entertained at the count's lodgings, where quadrille was proposed by the abbé, as the most innocent pastime, and the proposal was immediately embraced by all present, and by none with more alacrity than by our adventurer, who, without putting forth a moiety of his skill, went home with

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twenty louis clear gain. Though, far from believing himself greatly superior to the rest of the party, in the artifices of play, he justly suspected that they had concealed their skill, with a view of stripping him on some other occasion; for he could not suppose that persons of their figure and character should be, in reality, such novices as they affected to appear.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

HE OVERLOOKS THE ADVANCES OF HIS FRIENDS, AND SMARTS SEVERELY FOR HIS NEGLECT.

STEELED with this cautious maxim, he guarded himself from their united endeavours, in sundry subsequent attacks, by which his first conjecture was confirmed, and still came off conqueror, by virtue of his unparalleled finesse and discretion; till at length they seemed to despair of making him their prey, and the count began to drop some hints, importing a desire of seeing him more closely united to the views and interest of their triumvirate. But Ferdinand, who was altogether selfish, and quite solitary in his prospects, discouraged all those advances, being resolved to trade upon his own bottom only, and to avoid all such connexions with any person or society whatever; much more, with a set of raw adventurers whose talents he despised. With these sentiments, he still maintained the dignity and reserve of his first appearance among them, and rather enhanced than diminished that idea of importance which he had inspired at the beginning; because, besides his other qualifications, they gave him credit for the address with which he kept himself superior to their united designs.

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While he thus enjoyed his pre-eminence, together with the fruits of his success at play, which he managed so discreetly as never to incur the reputation of an adventurer, he one day chanced to be at the ordinary, when the company was surprised by the entrance of such a figure as had never appeared before in that place. This was no other than a person habited in the exact uniform of an English jockey. His leathern cap, cut bob, fustian frock, flannel waistcoat, buff breeches, hunting-boots and whip, were sufficient of themselves to furnish out a phenomenon for the admiration of all Paris. But these peculiarities were rendered still more conspicuous by the behaviour of the man who owned them. When he crossed the threshold of the outward door, he produced such a sound from the smack of his whip, as equalled the explosion of an ordinary cohorn; and then broke forth into the halloo of a foxhunter, which he uttered with all its variations, in a strain of vociferation that seemed to astonish and confound the whole assembly, to whom he introduced himself and his spaniel, by exclaiming, in a tone something less melodious than the cry of mackerel or live cod, "By your leave, gentlevolks, I hope there 's no offence, in an honest plain Englishman's coming with money in his pocket, to taste a bit of your Vrench frigasee and ragooze."

This declaration was made in such a wild, fantastical manner, that the greatest part of the company mistook him for some savage monster or maniac, and consulted their safety by starting up from table, and drawing their swords. The Englishman, seeing

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such a martial apparatus produced against him, recoiled two or three steps, saying, "Waunds! a believe the people are all bewitched. What, do they take me for a beast of prey? is there nobody here that knows Sir Stentor Stile, or can speak to me in my own lingo?" He had no sooner pronounced these words, than the baronet, with marks of infinite surprise, ran towards him, crying, "Good Heaven! Sir Stentor, who expected to meet with you in Paris?" Upon which, the other eyeing him very earnestly, "Odds heartlikins!" cried he, "my neighbour, Sir Giles Squirrel, as I am a living soul!" With these words he flew upon him like a tiger, kissed him from ear to ear, demolished his periwig, and disordered the whole economy of his dress, to the no small entertainment of the company.

Having well-nigh stifled his countryman with embraces, and besmeared himself with pulville from head to foot, he proceeded in this manner, "Mercy upon thee, knight, thou art so transmographied, and bedaubed, and bedizened, that thou mought rob thy own mother without fear of information. Look ye here now, I will be trussed, if the very bitch that was brought up in thy own bosom knows thee again. Hey, Sweetlips, here hussy, d—n the tuoad, dos't n't know thy old measter? Ey, ey, thou may'st smell till Christmas, I'll be bound to be hanged, knight, if the creature's nose an't foundered by the d—d stinking perfumes you have got among you."

These compliments being passed, the two knights sat down by one another, and Sir Stentor being asked by his neighbour, upon what errand he had crossed

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the sea, gave him to understand, that he had come to France, in consequence of a wager with Squire Snaffle, who had laid a thousand pounds, that he, Sir Stentor, would not travel to Paris by himself, and for a whole month appear every day at a certain hour in the public walks, without wearing any other dress than that in which he saw him. "The fellor has got no more stuff in his pate," continued this polite stranger, "than a jackass, to think I could not find my way hither thof I could not jabber your French lingo. Ecod! the people of this country are sharp enough to find out your meaning, when you want to spend anything among them; and, as for the matter of dress, bodikins! for a thousand pound, I would engage to live in the midst of them, and show myself without any clothes at all. Odds heart! a true-born Englishman needs not be ashamed to show his face, nor his backside neither, with the best Frenchman that ever trod the ground. Thof we Englishmen don't beplaister our doublets with gold and silver, I believe as how we have our pockets better lined than most of our neighbours; and for all my bit of a fustian frock, that cost me in all but forty shillings, I believe, between you and me, knight, I have more dust in my fob, than all those powdered sparks put together. But the worst of the matter is this; here is no solid belly-timber in this country. One can't have a slice of delicate sirloin, or nice buttock of beef, for love nor money. A pize upon them! I could get no eatables upon the ruoad, but what they called bully, which looks like the flesh of Pharaoh's lean kine stewed into rags and tatters; and then their

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peajohn, peajohn, rabbet them! One would think every old woman of this kingdom hatched pigeons from her own body."

It is not to be supposed that such an original sat unobserved. The French and other foreigners, who had never been in England, were struck dumb with amazement at the knight's appearance and deportment; while the English guests were overwhelmed with shame and confusion, and kept a most wary silence, for fear of being recognised by their countryman. As for our adventurer, he was inwardly transported with joy at sight of this curiosity. He considered him as a genuine, rich country booby, of the right English growth, fresh as imported; and his heart throbbed with rapture, when he heard Sir Stentor value himself upon the lining of his pockets. He foresaw, indeed, that the other knight would endeavour to reserve him for his own game; but he was too conscious of his own accomplishments to think he should find great difficulty in superseding the influence of Sir Giles.

Meanwhile, the new-comer was by his friend helped to some ragout, which pleased his palate so well, that he declared he should now make a hearty meal, for the first time since he had crossed the water; and, while his good-humour prevailed, he drank to every individual around the table. Ferdinand seized this opportunity of insinuating himself into his favour, by saying in English, he was glad to find there was anything in France that was agreeable to Sir Stentor. To this compliment the knight replied with an air of surprise: "Waunds! I find here's another countryman

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of mine in this here company. Sir, I am proud to see you with all my heart." So speaking, he thrust out his right hand across the table, and shook our hero by the fist, with such violence of civility, as proved very grievous to a French marquis, who, in helping himself to soup, was jostled in such a manner, as to overturn the dividing-spoon in his own bosom. The Englishman, seeing the mischief he had produced, cried, "No offence, I hope," in a tone of vociferation, which the marquis in all probability misconstrued; for he began to model his features into a very sublime and peremptory look, when Fathom interpreted the apology, and at the same time informed Sir Stentor, that although he himself had not the honour of being an Englishman, he had always entertained a most particular veneration for the country, and learned the language in consequence of that esteem.

"Blood!" answered the knight, "I think myself the more obliged to you for your kind opinion, than if you was my countryman in good earnest. For there be abundance of we English — no offence, Sir Giles — that seem to be ashamed of their own nation, and leave their homes to come and spend their fortunes abroad, among a parcel of — you understand me, sir — a word to the wise, as the saying is." — Here he was interrupted by an article of the second course, that seemed to give him great disturbance. This was a roasted leveret, very strong of the fumet, which happened to be placed directly under his nose. His sense of smelling was no sooner encountered by the effluvia of this delicious fare, than he started

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up from table, exclaiming, "Odd's my liver! here 's a piece of carrion, that I would not offer to e'er a hound in my kennel; 't is enough to make any Christian vomit both gut and gall"; and indeed by the wry faces he made while he ran to the door, his stomach seemed ready to justify this last assertion.

The abbé, who concluded, from these symptoms of disgust, that the leveret was not sufficiently stale, began to exhibit marks of discontent, and desired that it might be brought to the other end of the table for his examination. He accordingly hung over it with the most greedy appetite, feasting his nostrils with the steams of animal putrefaction; and at length declared that the morceau was passable, though he owned it would have been highly perfect, had it been kept another week. Nevertheless, mouths were not wanting to discuss it, insipid as it was; for in three minutes there was not a vestige to be seen of that which had offended the organs of Sir Stentor, who now resumed his place, and did justice to the dessert. But what he seemed to relish better than any other part of the entertainment, was the conversation of our adventurer, whom, after dinner, he begged to have the honour of treating with a dish of coffee, to the seeming mortification of his brother knight, over which Fathom exulted in his own heart.

In short, our hero, by his affability and engaging deportment, immediately gained possession of Sir Stentor's good graces, insomuch, that he desired to crack a bottle with him in the evening, and they repaired to an auberge, whither his fellow-knight

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accompanied him, not without manifest signs of reluctance. There the stranger gave a loose to jollity; though at first he d—ed the burgundy as a poor thin liquor, that ran through him in a twinkling, and, instead of warming, cooled his heart and bowels. However, it insensibly seemed to give the lie to his imputation; for his spirits rose to a more elevated pitch of mirth and good-fellowship; he sung, or rather roared, the Early Horn, so as to alarm the whole neighbourhood, and began to slabber his companions with a most bear-like affection. Yet whatever haste he made to the goal of ebriety, he was distanced by his brother baronet, who from the beginning of the party had made little other use of his mouth than to receive the glass, and now sunk down upon the floor, in a state of temporary annihilation.

He was immediately carried to bed by the direction of Ferdinand, who now saw himself in a manner possessor of that mine to which he had made such eager and artful advances. That he might, therefore, carry on the approaches in the same cautious manner, he gradually shook off the trammels of sobriety, gave a loose to that spirit of freedom which good liquor commonly inspires, and, in the familiarity of drunkenness, owned himself head of a noble family of Poland, from which he had been obliged to absent himself on account of an affair of honour, not yet compromised.

Having made this confession, and laid strong injunctions of secrecy upon Sir Stentor, his countenance seemed to acquire from every succeeding glass a new symptom of intoxication. They renewed their

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embraces, swore eternal friendship from that day, and swallowed fresh bumpers, till both being in all appearance quite overpowered, they began to yawn in concert, and even nod in their chairs. The knight seemed to resent the attacks of slumber, as so many impertinent attempts to interrupt their entertainment; he cursed his own propensity to sleep, imputing it to the d—ed French climate, and proposed to engage in some pastime that would keep them awake. "Odd's flesh!" cried the Briton, "when I'm at home, I defy all the devils in hell to fasten my eyelids together, if so be as I am otherwise inclined. For there's mother and sister Nan, and brother Numps and I, continue to divert ourselves at all-fours, brag, cribbage, tetotum, husslecap, and chuck-varthing, and, thof I say it, that should n't say it, I won't turn my back to e'er a he in England, at any of these pastimes. And so, Count, if you are so disposed, I am your man, that is, in the way of friendship, at which of these you shall please to pitch upon."

To this proposal Fathom replied, he was quite ignorant of all the games he had mentioned; but, in order to amuse Sir Stentor, he would play with him at lansquenet, for a trifle, as he had laid it down for a maxim, to risk nothing considerable at play. "Waunds!" answered the knight, "I hope you don't think I come here in quest of money. Thank God! I have a good landed estate worth five thousand a year, and owe no man a halfpenny; and I question whether there be many counts in your nation — no offence, I hope — that can say a bolder word. As for your lambskin net, I know nothing of the matter;

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but I will toss up with you for a guinea, cross or pile, as the saying is; or, if there 's such a thing in this country as a box and dice, I love to hear the bones rattle sometimes."

Fathom found some difficulty in concealing his joy at the mention of this last amusement, which had been one of his chief studies, and in which he had made such progress, that he could calculate all the chances with the utmost exactness and certainty. However, he made shift to contain himself within due bounds, and, with seeming indifference, consented to pass away an hour at hazard, provided the implements could be procured. Accordingly, the landlord was consulted, and their desire gratified; the dice were produced, and the table resounded with the effects of their mutual eagerness. Fortune, at first, declared for the Englishman, who was permitted by our adventurer to win twenty broad pieces; and he was so elated with his success, as to accompany every lucky throw with a loud burst of laughter, and other savage and simple manifestations of excessive joy, exclaiming, in a tone something less sweet than the bellowing of a bull, "Now for the main, Count, — odd! here they come — here are the seven black stars, i' faith. Come along, my yellow boys — odd's heart! I never liked the face of Lewis before."

Fathom drew happy presages from these boyish raptures, and, after having indulged them for some time, began to avail himself of his arithmetic, in consequence of which the knight was obliged to refund the greatest part of his winning. Then he altered his note, and became as intemperate in his

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chagrin, as he had been before immoderate in his mirth. He cursed himself and his whole generation, d—ed his bad luck, stamped with his feet upon the floor, and challenged Ferdinand to double stakes. This was a very welcome proposal to our hero, who found Sir Stentor just such a subject as he had long desired to encounter with; the more the Englishman laid, the more he lost, and Fathom took care to inflame his passions, by certain well-timed sarcasms upon his want of judgment, till at length he became quite outrageous, swore the dice were false, and threw them out at the window; pulled off his periwig, and committed it to the flames, spoke with the most rancorous contempt of his adversary's skill, insisted upon his having stripped many a better man, for all he was a Count, and threatening that, before they parted, he should not only look like a Pole, but also smell like a pole-cat.

This was a spirit which our adventurer industriously kept up, observing that the English were dupes to all the world; and that, in point of genius and address, they were no more than noisy braggadocios. In short, another pair of dice was procured, the stakes were again raised, and, after several vicissitudes, fortune declared so much in favour of the knight, that Fathom lost all the money in his pocket, amounting to a pretty considerable sum. By this time he was warmed into uncommon eagerness and impatience; being equally piqued at the success and provoking exultations of his antagonist, whom he now invited to his lodgings, in order to decide the contest. Sir Stentor complied with this

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request; the dispute was renewed with various success, till, towards daylight, Ferdinand saw this noisy, raw, inexperienced simpleton, carry off all his ready cash, together with his jewels, and almost everything that was valuable about his person; and, to crown the whole, the victor at parting told him with a most intolerable sneer, that as soon as the Count should receive another remittance from Poland, he would give him his revenge.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

HE BEARS HIS FATE LIKE A PHILOSOPHER; AND CONTRACTS ACQUAINTANCE WITH A VERY REMARKABLE PERSONAGE.

THIS was a proper subject for our hero to moralise upon; and accordingly it did not pass without his remarks; he found himself fairly foiled at his own weapons, reduced to indigence in a foreign land, and, what he chiefly regretted, robbed of all those gay expectations he had indulged from his own supposed excellence in the wiles of fraud; for, upon a little recollection, he plainly perceived he had fallen a sacrifice to the confederacy he had refused to join; and did not at all doubt that the dice were loaded for his destruction. But, instead of beating his head against the wall, tearing his hair, imprecating vain curses upon himself, or betraying other frantic symptoms of despair, he resolved to accommodate himself to his fate, and profit by the lesson he had so dearly bought.

With this intention, he immediately dismissed his valet, quitted his lodgings, retired to an obscure street on the other side of the river, and, covering one eye with a large patch of black silk, presented himself in quality of a musician to the director of

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the opera, who, upon hearing a trial of his skill, received him into the band without further question. While he continued in this situation, he not only improved his taste and execution in music, but likewise found frequent opportunities to extend his knowledge of mankind; for, besides the employment he exercised in public, he was often concerned in private concerts that were given in the hotels of noblemen; by which means he became more and more acquainted with the persons, manners, and characters of high life, which he contemplated with the most industrious attention, as a spectator, who, being altogether unconcerned in the performance, is at more liberty to observe and enjoy the particulars of the entertainment.

It was in one of those assemblies he had the pleasure of seeing his friend Sir Stentor, dressed in the most fashionable manner, and behaving with all the overstrained politesse of a native Frenchman. He was accompanied by his brother knight and the abbé; and this triumvirate, even in Fathom's hearing, gave a most ludicrous detail of the finesse they had practised upon the Polish Count, to their entertainer, who was ambassador from a certain court, and made himself extremely merry with the particulars of the relation. Indeed, they made shift to describe some of the circumstances in such a ridiculous light, that our adventurer himself, smarting as he was with the disgrace, could not help laughing in secret at the account. He afterwards made it his business to inquire into the characters of the two British knights, and understood they were notorious

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sharpers, who had come abroad for the good of their country, and now hunted in couple among a French pack, that dispersed themselves through the public ordinaries, walks, and spectacles, in order to make a prey of incautious strangers.

The pride of Ferdinand was piqued at this information; and he was even animated with the desire of making reprisals upon this fraternity, from which he ardently longed to retrieve his honour and effects. But the issue of his last adventure had reinforced his caution; and, for the present, he found means to suppress the dictates of his avarice and ambition; resolving to employ his whole penetration in reconnoitring the ground, before he should venture to take the field again. He therefore continued to act the part of a one-eyed fiddler, under the name of Fadini, and lived with incredible frugality, that he might save a purse for his future operations. In this manner had he proceeded for the space of ten months, during which he acquired a competent knowledge of the city of Paris, when his curiosity was attracted by certain peculiarities in the appearance of a man who lived in one of the upper apartments belonging to the house in which he himself had fixed his habitation.

This was a tall, thin, meagre figure, with a long black beard, an aquiline nose, a brown complexion, and a most piercing vivacity in his eyes. He seemed to be about the age of fifty, wore the Persian habit, and there was a remarkable severity in his aspect and demeanour. He and our adventurer had been fellow-lodgers for some time, and, according to the

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laudable custom in these days, had hitherto remained as much estranged to one another, as if they had lived on opposite sides of the globe; but of late the Persian seemed to regard our hero with particular attention; when they chanced to meet on the staircase, or elsewhere, he bowed to Ferdinand with great solemnity, and complimented him with the pas. He even proceeded, in the course of this communication, to open his mouth, and salute him with a good-morrow, and sometimes made the common remarks upon the weather. Fathom, who was naturally complaisant, did not discourage these advances. On the contrary, he behaved to him with marks of particular respect, and one day desired the favour of his company to breakfast.

This invitation the stranger declined with due acknowledgment, on pretence of being out of order; and, in the meantime, our adventurer bethought himself of questioning the landlord concerning his outlandish guest. His curiosity was rather inflamed than satisfied with the information he could obtain from this quarter; for all he learned was, that the Persian went by the name of Ali Beker, and that he had lived in the house for the space of four months, in a most solitary and parsimonious manner, without being visited by one living soul; that, for some time after his arrival, he had been often heard to groan dismally in the night, and even to exclaim in an unknown language, as if he had laboured under some grievous affliction; and though the first transports of his grief had subsided, it was easy to perceive he still indulged a deep-rooted melancholy; for the tears

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were frequently observed to trickle down his beard. The commissaire of the quarter had at first ordered this Oriental to be watched in his outgoings, according to the maxims of the French police; but his life was found so regular and inoffensive, that this precaution was soon set aside.

Any man of humane sentiments, from the knowledge of these particulars, would have been prompted to offer his services to the forlorn stranger; but as our hero was devoid of all these infirmities of human nature, it was necessary that other motives should produce the same effect. His curiosity, therefore, joined with the hopes of converting the confidence of Ali to his own emolument, effectually impelled him towards his acquaintance; and, in a little time, they began to relish the conversation of each other. For, as the reader may have already observed, Fathom possessed all the arts of insinuation, and had discernment enough to perceive an air of dignity in the Persian, which the humility of his circumstances could not conceal. He was, moreover, a man of good understanding, not without a tincture of letters, perfectly well bred, though in a ceremonious style, extremely moral in his discourse, and scrupulously nice in his notions of honour.

Our hero conformed himself in all respects to the other's opinions, and managed his discretion so as to pass upon him for a gentleman reduced by misfortunes to the exercise of an employment which was altogether unsuitable to his birth and quality. He made earnest and repeated tenders of his good offices to the stranger, and pressed him to make use of his purse

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with such cordial perseverance, that, at length, Ali's reserve was overcome, and he condescended to borrow of him a small sum, which in all probability, saved his life; for he had been driven to the utmost extremity of want before he would accept of this assistance.

Fathom, having gradually stole into his good graces, began to take notice of many piteous sighs that escaped him in the moments of their intercourse, and seemed to denote an heart fraught with woe; and, on pretence of administering consolation and counsel, begged leave to know the cause of his distress, observing, that his mind would be disburdened by such communication, and, perhaps, his grief alleviated by some means which they might jointly concert and execute in his behalf.

Ali, thus solicited, would often shake his head, with marks of extreme sorrow and despondence, and, while the tears gushed from his eyes, declared that his distress was beyond the power of any remedy but death, and that, by making our hero his confidant, he should only extend his unhappiness to a friend, without feeling the least remission of his own torture. Notwithstanding these repeated declarations, Ferdinand, who was well enough acquainted with the mind of man to know that such importunity is seldom or never disagreeable, redoubled his instances, together with his expressions of sympathy and esteem, until the stranger was prevailed upon to gratify his curiosity and benevolence. Having, therefore, secured the chamber door one night, while all the rest of the family were asleep, the unfortunate Ali disclosed himself in these words.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

THE HISTORY OF THE NOBLE CASTILIAN.

I SHOULD be ungrateful, as well as unwise, did I longer resist the desire you express to know the particulars of that destiny which hath driven me to this miserable disguise, and rendered me in all considerations the most wretched of men. I have felt your friendship, am confident of your honour, and though my misfortunes are such as can never be repaired, because I am utterly cut off from hope, which is the wretch's last comfort, yet I may, by your means, be enabled to bear them with some degree of fortitude and resignation.

Know then, my name is not Ali; neither am I of Persian extraction. I had once the honour to own myself a Castilian, and was, under the appellation of Don Diego de Zelos, respected as the head of one of the most ancient families of that kingdom. Judge, then, how severe that distress must be, which compels a Spaniard to renounce his country, his honours, and his name. My youth was not spent in inglorious ease, neither did it waste unheeded in the rolls of fame. Before I had attained the age of nineteen, I was twice wounded in battle. I once fortunately recovered the standard of the regiment to which I

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landlord, he, for five shillings, bought one of Tom's notes, which sold at a very large discount, and, taking out a writ upon it, put it into the hands of the bailiff, who had used him ill. The catchpole, after a diligent search, had an opportunity of executing the writ upon the defendant, who, without ceremony, broke one of his arms, fractured his skull, and belaboured him in such a manner, that he lay without sense or motion on the spot. By such exploits, this hero became so formidable, that no single bailiff would undertake to arrest him; so that he appeared in all public places untouched. At length, however, several officers of the Marshalsea Court entered into a confederacy against him; and two of the number, attended by three desperate followers, ventured to arrest him one day in the Strand, near Hungerford Market. He found it impossible to make resistance, because the whole gang sprung upon him at once, like so many tigers, and pinioned his arms so fast, that he could not wag a finger. Perceiving himself fairly overpowered, he desired to be conducted forthwith to jail, and was stowed in a boat accordingly; by the time they had reached the middle of the river, he found means to overset the wherry by accident, and every man, disregarding the prisoner, consulted his own safety. As for Hackabout, to whom that element was quite familiar, he mounted astride upon the keel of the boat, which was uppermost, and exhorted the bailiffs to swim for their lives; protesting before God, that they had no other chance to be saved.

"The watermen were immediately taken up by

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some of their own friends, who, far from yielding any assistance to the catchpoles, kept aloof, and exulted in their calamity. In short, two of the five went to the bottom, and never saw the light of God's sun, and the other three, with great difficulty, saved themselves by laying hold on the rudder of a dung-barge, to which they were carried by the stream, while Tom, with great deliberation, swam across to the Surrey shore. After this achievement, he was so much dreaded by the whole fraternity, that they shivered at the very mention of his name; and this character, which some people would think an advantage to a man in debt, was the greatest misfortune that could possibly happen to him; because no tradesman would give him credit for the least trifle, on the supposition that he could not indemnify himself in the common course of law."

The parson did not approve of Mr. Hackabout's method of escaping, which he considered as a very unchristian attempt upon the lives of his fellow-subjects: — "It is enough," said he, "that we elude the laws of our country, without murdering the officers of justice. For my own part, I can lay my hand upon my heart, and safely say, that I forgive from my soul the fellow by whom I was made a prisoner, although the circumstances of his behaviour were treacherous, wicked, and profane. You must know, Mr. Pickle, I was one day called into my chapel, in order to join a couple in the holy bands of matrimony; and, my affairs being at that time so situated, as to lay me under apprehensions of an arrest, I cautiously surveyed the man through a lattice which

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was made for that purpose, before I would venture to come within his reach. He was clothed in a seaman's jacket and trousers, and had such an air of simplicity in his countenance, as divested me of all suspicion. I therefore, without further scruple, trusted myself in his presence, began to exercise the duty of my function, and had actually performed one half of the ceremony, when the supposed woman, pulling out a paper from her bosom, exclaimed, with a masculine voice, 'Sir, you are my prisoner; I have got a writ against you for five hundred pounds.' I was thunderstruck at this declaration, not so much on account of my own misfortune, which, thank Heaven, I can bear with patience and resignation, as at the impiety of the wretch, first, in disguising such a worldly aim under the cloak of religion; and, secondly, in prostituting the service, when there was no occasion for so doing, his design having previously taken effect. Yet I forgive him, poor soul! because he knew not what he did; and I hope you, Sir Sipple, will exert the same Christian virtue towards the man by whom you was likewise overreached."

"Oh! d—n the rascal," cried the knight; "were I his judge, he should be condemned to flames everlasting. A villain! to disgrace me in such a manner, before almost all the fashionable company in town." Our hero expressing a curiosity to know the particulars of this adventure, the knight gratified his desire, by telling him, that one evening, while he was engaged in a party of cards, at a drum in the house of a certain lady of quality, he was given to understand by one of the servants, that a stranger,

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very richly dressed, was just arrived in a chair, preceded by five footmen with flambeaux, and that he refused to come upstairs, until he should be introduced by Sir Sipple. "Upon this notice," continued the knight, "I judged it was some of my quality friends; and, having obtained her ladyship's permission to bring him up, went down to the hall, and perceived a person, whom, to the best of my recollection, I had never seen before. However, his appearance was so magnificent, that I could not harbour the least suspicion of his true quality; and, seeing me advance, he saluted me with a very genteel bow, observing, that though he had not the honour of my acquaintance, he could not dispense with waiting upon me, even on that occasion, in consequence of a letter which he had received from a particular friend. So saying, he put a paper into my hand, intimating that he had got a writ against me for ten thousand pounds, and that it would be my interest to submit without resistance, for he was provided with a guard of twenty men, who surrounded the door in different disguises, determined to secure me against all opposition. Enraged at the scoundrel's finesse, and trusting to the assistance of the real footmen assembled in the hall, 'So you are a rascally bailiff,' said I, 'who have assumed the garb of a gentleman, in order to disturb her ladyship's company. Take this fellow, my lads, and roll him in the kennel. Here are ten guineas for your trouble.' These words were no sooner pronounced, than I was seized, lifted up, placed in a chair, and carried off in the twinkling of an eye; not but that the servants

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of the house, and some other footmen, made a motion towards my rescue, and alarmed all the company above. But the bailiff affirming with undaunted effrontery, that I was taken up upon an affair of state, and so many people appearing in his behalf, the countess would not suffer the supposed messenger to be insulted; and he carried me to the county jail without further let or molestation."

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CHAPTER NINETY-EIGHT

PICKLE SEEMS TOLERABLY WELL RECONCILED TO HIS CAGE; AND IS BY THE CLERGYMAN ENTERTAINED WITH THE MEMOIRS OF A NOTED PERSONAGE, WHOM HE SEES BY ACCIDENT IN THE FLEET.

THE knight had scarce finished his narrative, when our hero was told, that a gentleman in the coffee-room wanted to see him; and when he went thither, he found his friend Crabtree, who had transacted all his affairs, according to the determination of the preceding day; and now gave him an account of the remarks he overheard, on the subject of his misfortune; — for the manner of the arrest was so public and extraordinary, that those who were present immediately propagated it among their acquaintance, and it was that same evening discoursed upon at several tea and card tables, with this variation from the truth, that the debt amounted to twelve thousand, instead of twelve hundred pounds. From which circumstance it was conjectured, that Peregrine was a bite from the beginning, who had found credit on account of his effrontery and appearance, and imposed himself upon the town as a young gentleman of fortune. They rejoiced, therefore, at his calamity, which they considered as a just punishment for his

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fraud and presumption, and began to review certain particulars of his conduct, that plainly demonstrated him to be a rank adventurer, long before he had arrived at this end of his career.

Pickle, who now believed his glory was set for ever, received this intelligence with that disdain which enables a man to detach himself effectually from the world, and, with great tranquillity, gave the misanthrope an entertaining detail of what he had seen and heard since their last parting. While they amused themselves in this manner over a dish of coffee, they were joined by the parson, who congratulated our hero upon his bearing mischance with such philosophic quiet, and began to regale the two friends with some curious circumstances relating to the private history of the several prisoners, as they happened to come in.

At length a gentleman entered; at sight of whom the clergyman rose up, and saluted him with a most reverential bow, which was graciously returned by the stranger, who, with a young man that attended him, retired to the other end of the room. They were no sooner out of hearing, than the communicative priest desired his company to take particular notice of this person to whom he had paid his respects. "That man," said he, "is this day one of the most flagrant instances of neglected virtue which the world can produce. Over and above a cool discerning head, fraught with uncommon learning and experience, he is possessed of such fortitude and resolution, as no difficulties can discourage, and no danger impair; and so indefatigable in his humanity,

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that even now, while he is surrounded with such embarrassments as would distract the brain of an ordinary mortal, he has added considerably to his encumbrances, by taking under his protection that young gentleman, who, induced by his character, appealed to his benevolence for redress of the grievances under which he labours from the villany of his guardian."

Peregrine's curiosity being excited by this encomium, he asked the name of this generous patron, of which when he was informed, "I am no stranger," said he, "to the fame of that gentleman, who has made a considerable noise in the world, on account of that great cause he undertook in defence of an unhappy orphan; and, since he is a person of such an amiable disposition, I am heartily sorry to find that his endeavours have not met with that successful issue which their good fortune in the beginning seemed to promise. Indeed, the circumstance of his espousing that cause was so uncommon and romantic, and the depravity of the human heart so universal, that some people, unacquainted with his real character, imagined his views were altogether selfish; and some were not wanting, who affirmed he was a mere adventurer. Nevertheless, I must do him the justice to own, I have heard some of the most virulent of those who were concerned on the other side of the question, bear testimony in his favour, observing, that he was deceived into the expense of the whole, by the plausible story which at first engaged his compassion. Your description of his character confirms me in the same opinion, though I am quite

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ignorant of the affair; the particulars of which I should be glad to learn, as well as the genuine account of his own life, many circumstances of which are by his enemies, I believe, egregiously misrepresented."

"Sir," answered the priest, "that is a piece of satisfaction which I am glad to find myself capable of giving you. I have had the pleasure of being acquainted with Mr. M—— from his youth, and everything which I shall relate concerning him, you may depend upon as a fact which hath fallen under my own cognisance, or been vouched upon the credit of undoubted evidence.

"Mr. M——'s father was a minister of the Established Church of Scotland, descended from a very ancient clan, and his mother nearly related to a noble family in the northern part of that kingdom. While the son was boarded at a public school, where he made good progress in the Latin tongue, his father died, and he was left an orphan to the care of an uncle, who, finding him determined against any servile employment, kept him at school, that he might prepare himself for the university, with a view of being qualified for his father's profession.

"Here his imagination was so heated by the warlike achievements he found recorded in the Latin authors, such as Cæsar, Curtius, and Buchanan, that he was seized with an irresistible thirst of military glory, and desire of trying his fortune in the army. His Majesty's troops taking the field, in consequence of the rebellion which happened in the year seventeen hundred and fifteen, this young adventurer,

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thinking no life equal to that of a soldier, found means to furnish himself with a fusil and bayonet, and, leaving the school, repaired to the camp near Stirling, with a view of signalising himself in the field, though he was at that time but just turned of thirteen. He offered his service to several officers, in hope of being enlisted in their companies; but they would not receive him, because they rightly concluded, that he was some schoolboy broke loose, without the knowledge or consent of his relations. Notwithstanding this discouragement, he continued in camp, curiously prying into every part of the service; and such was the resolution conspicuous in him, even at such a tender age, that, after his small finances were exhausted, he persisted in his design; and, because he would not make his wants known, actually subsisted for several days on hips, haws, and sloes, and other spontaneous fruits, which he gathered in the woods and fields. Meanwhile, he never failed to be present, when any regiment or corps of men were drawn out to be exercised and reviewed, and accompanied them in all their evolutions, which he had learned to great perfection, by observing the companies which were quartered in the place where he was at school. This eagerness and perseverance attracted the notice of many officers, who, after having commended his spirit and zeal, pressed him to return to his parents, and even threatened to expel him from the camp, if he would not comply with their advice.

"These remonstrances having no other effect than that of warning him to avoid his monitors, they

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thought proper to alter their behaviour towards him, took him into their protection, and even into their mess, and what, above all other marks of favour, pleased the young soldier most, permitted him to incorporate in the battalion, and take his turn of duty with the other men. In this happy situation he was discovered by a relation of his mother, who was a captain in the army, and who used all his authority and influence in persuading M—— to return to school; but, finding him deaf to his admonitions and threats, he took him under his own care, and, when the army marched to Dumblane, left him at Stirling with express injunctions to keep himself within the walls.

"He temporised with his kinsman, fearing that, should he seem refractory, the captain would have ordered him to be shut up in the castle. Inflamed with the desire of seeing a battle, his relation no sooner marched off the ground, than he mixed in with another regiment, to which his former patrons belonged, and proceeded to the field, where he distinguished himself, even at that early time of life, by his gallantry, in helping to retrieve a pair of colours belonging to M—n's regiment; so that, after the affair, he was presented to the Duke of Argyll, and recommended strongly to Brigadier Grant, who invited him into his regiment, and promised to provide for him with the first opportunity. But that gentleman in a little time lost his command upon the duke's disgrace, and the regiment was ordered for Ireland, being given to Colonel Nassau, whose favour the young volunteer acquired to such a degree, that he

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was recommended to the King for his ensigncy, which in all probability he would have obtained, had not the regiment been unluckily reduced.

"In consequence of this reduction, which happened in the most severe season of the year, he was obliged to return to his own country, through infinite hardships, to which he was exposed from the narrowness of his circumstances. And continuing still enamoured of a military life, he entered into the regiment of Scotch Greys, at that time commanded by the late Sir James Campbell, who, being acquainted with his family and character, encouraged him with a promise of speedy preferment. In this corps he remained three years, during which he had no opportunity of seeing actual service, except at the affair of Glensheel; and this life of insipid quiet must have hung heavy upon a youth of M——'s active disposition, had not he found exercise for the mind, in reading books of amusement, history, voyages, and geography, together with those that treated of the art of war, ancient and modern, for which he contracted such an eager appetite, that he used to spend sixteen hours a day in this employment.

"About that time he became acquainted with a gentleman of learning and taste, who observing his indefatigable application, and insatiable thirst after knowledge, took upon himself the charge of superintending his studies; and, by the direction of such an able guide, the young soldier converted his attention to a more solid and profitable course of reading. So inordinate was his desire of making speedy advances in the paths of learning, that, within the compass of

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three months, he diligently perused the writings of Locke and Malebranche, and made himself master of the first six and of the eleventh and twelfth books of Euclid's Elements. He considered Puffendorf and Grotius with uncommon care, acquired a tolerable degree of knowledge in the French language, and his imagination was so captivated with the desire of learning, that, seeing no prospect of a war, or views of being provided for in the service, he quitted the army, and went through a regular course of university education. Having made such progress in his studies, he resolved to qualify himself for the church, and acquired such a stock of school divinity, under the instructions of a learned professor at Edinburgh, that he more than once mounted the rostrum in the public hall, and held forth with uncommon applause. But being discouraged from a prosecution of his plan, by the unreasonable austerity of some of the Scotch clergy, by whom the most indifferent and innocent words and actions were often misconstrued into levity and misconduct, he resolved to embrace the first favourable opportunity of going abroad, being inflamed with the desire of seeing foreign countries; and actually set out for Holland, where, for the space of two years, he studied the Roman law, with the law of Nature and Nations, under the famous professors Tolieu and Barbeyrac.

"Having thus finished his school education, he set out for Paris, with a view to make himself perfect in the French language, and learn such useful exercises, as might be acquired with the wretched remnant of his slender estate, which was by that time reduced

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very low. In his journey through the Netherlands, he went to Namur, and paid his respects to Bishop Strickland and General Collier, by whom he was received with great civility, in consequence of letters of recommendation, with which he was provided from the Hague; and the old general assured him of his protection and interest for a pair of colours, if he was disposed to enter into the Dutch service.

"Though he was by that time pretty well cured of his military Quixotism, he would not totally decline the generous proffer, for which he thanked him in the most grateful terms, telling the general that he would pay his duty to him on his return from France, and then, if he could determine upon re-engaging in the army, should think himself highly honoured in being under his command.

"After a stay of two months in Flanders, he proceeded to Paris, and, far from taking up his habitation in the suburbs of St. Germain, according to the custom of English travellers, he hired a private lodging on the other side of the river, and associated chiefly with French officers, who, their youthful sallies being over, are allowed to be the politest gentlemen of that kingdom. In this scheme he found his account so much, that he could not but wonder at the folly of his countrymen, who lose the main scope of their going abroad, by spending their time and fortune idly with one another.

"During his residence in Holland, he had made himself acquainted with the best authors in the French language, so that he was able to share in their conversation; a circumstance from which he

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found great benefit; for it not only improved him in his knowledge of that tongue, but also tended to the enlargement of his acquaintance, in the course of which he contracted intimacies in some families of good fashion, especially those of the long robe, which would have enabled him to pass his time very agreeably, had he been a little easier in point of fortune. But his finances, notwithstanding the most rigid economy, being in a few months reduced to a very low ebb, the prospect of indigence threw a damp upon all his pleasures, though he never suffered himself to be thereby in any degree dispirited; being in that respect of so happy a disposition, that conscious poverty or abundance made very slight impressions upon his mind.

"This consumption of his cash, however, involved him in some perplexity; and he deliberated with himself, whether he should return to General Collier, or repair to London, where he might possibly fall into some business not unbecoming a gentleman; though he was very much mortified to find himself incapable of gratifying an inordinate desire which possessed him of making the grand tour, or, at least, of visiting the southern parts of France.

"While he thus hesitated between different suggestions, he was one morning visited by a gentleman who had sought and cultivated his friendship, and for whom he had done a good office, in supporting him with spirit against a brutal German, with whom he had an affair of honour. This gentleman came to propose a party for a fortnight, to Fontainebleau, where the court then was; and the proposal being

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declined by M—— with more than usual stiffness, his friend was very urgent to know the reason of his refusal, and at length, with some confusion, said, 'Perhaps your finances are low.' M—— replied, that he had wherewithal to defray the expense of his journey to London, where he could be furnished with a fresh supply; and this answer was no sooner made, than the other taking him by the hand, 'My dear friend,' said he, 'I am not unacquainted with your affairs, and would have offered you my credit long ago, if I had thought it would be acceptable; even now, I do not pretend to give you money, but desire and insist upon it, that you will accept of the loan of these two pieces of paper, to be repaid when you marry a woman with a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, or obtain an employment of a thousand a year.' So saying, he presented him with two actions of above two thousand livres each.

"M—— was astonished at this unexpected instance of generosity, in a stranger, and, with suitable acknowledgment, peremptorily refused to incur such an obligation; but at length he was, by dint of importunity and warm expostulation, prevailed upon to accept one of the actions, on condition that the gentleman would take his note for the sum; and this he absolutely rejected, until M—— promised to draw upon him for double the value or more, in case he should at any time want a further supply. This uncommon act of friendship and generosity, M—— afterwards had an opportunity to repay tenfold, though he could not help regretting the occasion, on his friend's account. That worthy man having, by

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that, while she accompanied Antonia's waiting-maid at church, she had seen her receive a billet from an old woman, who, kneeling at her side, had conveyed it in such a mysterious manner, as awakened the duenna's apprehensions about her young lady; she had therefore hastened home to communicate this piece of intelligence, that I might have an opportunity of examining the messenger before she could have time to deposit her trust. I could not help shivering with fearful presages upon this occasion, and even abhorring the person to whose duty and zeal I was beholden for the intelligence, even while I endeavoured to persuade myself that the inquiry would end in the detection of some paltry intrigue between the maid and her own gallant. I intercepted her in returning from church, and, commanding her to follow me to a convenient place, extorted from her, by dint of threats, the fatal letter, which I read to this effect: —

"The whole business of my life, O divine Serafina! will be to repay that affection I have been so happy as to engage. With what transport then shall I obey your summons, in performing that enterprise, which will rescue you from the bed of a detested rival, and put myself in full possession of a jewel which I value infinitely more than life! Yes, adorable creature! I have provided everything for our escape, and at midnight will attend you in your own apartment, from whence you shall be conveyed into a land of liberty and peace, where you will, unmolested, enjoy the purity of that religion you have espoused, and in full security bless the arms of your ever faithful, ORLANDO."

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Were you a fond parent, a tender husband, and a noble Castilian, I should not need to mention the unutterable horrors that took possession of my bosom, when I perused this accursed letter, by which I learned the apostasy, disobedience, and degeneracy of my idolised Serafina, who had overthrown and destroyed the whole plan of felicity which I had erected, and blasted all the glories of my name; and when the wretched messenger, terrified by my menaces and agitation, confessed that Antonia herself was privy to the guilt of her daughter, whom she had solemnly betrothed to that vile German, in the sight of Heaven, and that by her connivance this plebeian intended, that very night, to bereave me of my child, I was for some moments stupefied with grief and amazement, that gave way to an ecstasy of rage, which had well-nigh terminated in despair and distraction.

I now tremble, and my head grows giddy with the remembrance of that dreadful occasion. Behold how the drops trickle down my forehead; this agony is a fierce and familiar visitant; I shall banish it anon. I summoned my pride, my resentment, to my assistance; these are the cordials that support me against all other reflections; those were the auxiliaries that enabled me, in the day of trial, to perform that sacrifice which my honour demanded, in a strain so loud as to drown the cries of nature, love, and compassion. Yes, they espoused that glory which humanity would have betrayed, and my revenge was noble, though unnatural.

My scheme was soon laid, my resolution soon

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taken; I privately confined the wretch who had been the industrious slave of this infamous conspiracy, that she might take no step to frustrate or interrupt the execution of my design. Then repairing to the house of an apothecary who was devoted to my service, communicated my intention, which he durst not condemn, and could not reveal, without breaking the oath of secrecy I had imposed; and he furnished me with two vials of poison for the dismal catastrophe I had planned. Thus provided, I, on pretence of sudden business at Seville, carefully avoided the dear, the wretched pair, whom I had devoted to death, that my heart might not relent, by means of those tender ideas which the sight of them would have infallibly inspired; and, when daylight vanished, took my station near that part of the house through which the villain must have entered on his hellish purpose. There I stood, in a state of horrid expectation, my soul ravaged with the different passions that assailed it, until the fatal moment arrived; when I perceived the traitor approach the window of a lower apartment, which led into that of Serafina, and gently lifting the casement, which was purposely left unsecured, insinuated half of his body into the house. Then rushing upon him, in a transport of fury, I plunged my sword into his heart, crying, "Villain! receive the reward of thy treachery and presumption."

The steel was so well aimed as to render a repetition of the stroke unnecessary; he uttered one groan, and fell breathless at my feet. Exulting with this first success of my revenge, I penetrated into the

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chamber where the robber of my peace was expected by the unhappy Serafina and her mother, who, seeing me enter with a most savage aspect, and a sword reeking with the vengeance I had taken, seemed almost petrified with fear. "Behold," said I, "the blood of that base plebeian, who made an attempt upon the honour of my house; your conspiracy against the unfortunate Don Diego de Zelos is now discovered; that presumptuous slave, the favoured Orlando, is now no more."

Scarce had I pronounced these words, when a loud scream was uttered by both the unhappy victims. "If Orlando is slain," cried the infatuated Serafina, "what have I to do with life? O my dear lord! my husband, and my lover! how are our promised joys at once cut off! here, strike, my father! complete your barbarous sacrifice! the spirit of the murdered Orlando still hovers for his wife." These frantic exclamations, in which she was joined by Antonia, kept up the fury of my resentment, which by meekness and submission might have been weakened and rendered ineffectual. "Yes, hapless wretches," I replied, "ye shall enjoy your wish: the honour of my name requires that both shall die; yet I will not mangle the breast of Antonia, on which I have so often reposed; I will not shed the blood of Zelos, nor disfigure the beauteous form of Serafina, on which I have so often gazed with wonder and unspeakable delight. Here is an elixir, to which I trust the consummation of my revenge."

So saying, I emptied the vials into separate cups,

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and, presenting one in each hand, the miserable, the fair offenders instantly received the destined draughts, which they drank without hesitation; then praying to heaven for the wretched Don Diego, sunk upon the same couch, and expired without a groan. O well-contrived beverage! O happy composition, by which all the miseries of life are so easily cured!

Such was the fate of Antonia and Serafina; these hands were the instruments that deprived them of life, these eyes beheld them the richest prize that death had ever won. Powers supreme! does Don Diego live to make this recapitulation? I have done my duty; but ah! I am haunted by the furies of remorse; I am tortured with the incessant stings of remembrance and regret; even now the images of my wife and daughter present themselves to my imagination. All the scenes of happiness I have enjoyed as a lover, husband, and parent, all the endearing hopes I have cherished, now pass in review before me, embittering the circumstances of my inexpressible woe; and I consider myself as a solitary outcast from all the comforts of society. But, enough of these unmanly complaints; the yearnings of nature are too importunate.

Having completed my vengeance, I retired into my closet, and, furnishing myself with some ready money and jewels of considerable value, went into the stable, saddled my favourite steed, which I instantly mounted, and, before the tumults of my breast subsided, found myself at the town of St. Lucar. There I learned from inquiry, that there was a Dutch bark in the harbour ready to sail; upon

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which I addressed myself to the master, who, for a suitable gratification, was prevailed upon to weigh anchor that same night; so that, embarking without delay, I soon bid eternal adieu to my native country. It was not from reason and reflection that I took these measures for my personal safety; but, in consequence of an involuntary instinct, that seems to operate in the animal machine, while the faculty of thinking is suspended.

To what a dreadful reckoning was I called, when reason resumed her function! You may believe me, my friend, when I assure you, that I should not have outlived those tragedies I acted, had I not been restrained from doing violence upon myself by certain considerations, which no man of honour ought to set aside. I could not bear the thought of falling ingloriously by the hand of an executioner, and entailing disgrace upon a family that knew no stain; and I was deterred from putting an end to my own misery, by the apprehension of posthumous censure, which would have represented me as a desponding wretch, utterly destitute of that patience, fortitude, and resignation, which are the characteristics of a true Castilian. I was also influenced by religious motives that suggested to me the necessity of living to atone, by my sufferings and sorrow, for the guilt I had incurred in complying with a savage punctilio, which is, I fear, displeasing in the sight of Heaven.

These were the reasons that opposed my entrance into that peaceful harbour which death presented to my view; and they were soon reinforced by another

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principle that sanctioned my determination to continue at the servile oar of life. In consequence of unfavourable winds, our vessel for some days made small progress in her voyage to Holland, and near the coast of Gallicia we were joined by an English ship from Vigo, the master of which gave us to understand, that before he set sail, a courier had arrived from Madrid at that place, with orders for the corregidore to prevent the escape of any native Spaniard by sea from any port within his district; and to use his utmost endeavours to apprehend the person of Don Diego de Zelos, who was suspected of treasonable practices against the state. Such an order, with a minute description of my person, was at the same time despatched to all the seaports and frontier places in Spain.

You may easily suppose how I, who was already overwhelmed with distress, could bear this aggravation of misfortune and disgrace: I, who had always maintained the reputation of loyalty, which was acquired at the hazard of my life, and the expense of my blood. To deal candidly, I must own, that this intelligence roused me from a lethargy of grief which had begun to overpower my faculties. I immediately imputed this dishonourable charge to the evil offices of some villain, who had basely taken the advantage of my deplorable situation, and I was inflamed, inspirited with the desire of vindicating my fame, and revenging the injury. Thus animated, I resolved to disguise myself effectually from the observation of those spies which every nation finds its account in employing in foreign countries; I pur-

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chased this habit from the Dutch navigator, in whose house I kept myself concealed, after our arrival at Amsterdam, until my beard was grown to a sufficient length to favour my design, and then appeared as a Persian dealer in jewels. As I could gain no satisfactory information touching myself in this country, had no purpose to pursue, and was extremely miserable among a people, who, being mercenary and unsocial, were very ill adapted to alleviate the horrors of my condition, I gratified my landlord for his important services, with the best part of my effects; and having, by his means, procured a certificate from the magistracy, repaired to Rotterdam, from whence I set out in a travelling carriage for Antwerp, on my way to this capital; hoping, with a succession of different objects, to mitigate the anguish of my mind, and by the most industrious inquiry, to learn such particulars of that false impeachment, as would enable me to take measures for my own justification, as well as for projecting a plan of revenge against the vile perfidious author.

This, I imagined, would be no difficult task, considering the friendship and intercourse subsisting between the Spanish and French nations, and the communicative disposition for which the Parisians are renowned; but I have found myself egregiously deceived in my expectation. The officers of police in this city are so inquisitive and vigilant that the most minute action of a stranger is scrutinised with great severity; and, although the inhabitants are very frank in discoursing on indifferent subjects, they

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are at the same time extremely cautious in avoiding all conversation that turns upon state occurrences and maxims of government. In a word, the peculiarity of my appearance subjects me so much to particular observation, that I have hitherto thought proper to devour my griefs in silence, and even to bear the want of almost every convenience, rather than hazard a premature discovery, by offering my jewels to sale.

In this emergency I have been so far fortunate as to become acquainted with you, whom I look upon as a man of honour and humanity. Indeed, I was at first sight prepossessed in your favour, for, notwithstanding the mistakes which men daily commit in judging from appearances, there is something in the physiognomy of a stranger from which one cannot help forming an opinion of his character and disposition. For once, my penetration hath not failed me; your behaviour justifies my decision; you have treated me with that sympathy and respect which none but the generous will pay to the unfortunate. I have trusted you accordingly. I have put my life, my honour, in your power; and I must beg leave to depend upon your friendship, for obtaining that satisfaction for which alone I seek to live. Your employment engages you in the gay world; you daily mingle with the societies of men; the domestics of the Spanish ambassador will not shun your acquaintance; you may frequent the coffee-houses to which they resort; and, in the course of these occasions, unsuspected inform yourself of that mysterious charge which lies heavy on the fame of the unfortunate

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Don Diego. I must likewise implore your assistance in converting my jewels into money, that I may breathe independent of man, until Heaven shall permit me to finish this weary pilgrimage of life.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

A FLAGRANT INSTANCE OF FATHOM'S VIRTUE, IN THE MANNER OF HIS RETREAT TO ENGLAND.

FATHOM, who had lent an attentive ear to every circumstance of this disastrous story, no sooner heard it concluded, than, with an aspect of generous and cordial compassion, not even unattended with tears, he condoled the lamentable fate of Don Diego de Zelos, deplored the untimely death of the gentle Antonia and the fair Serafina, and undertook the interest of the wretched Castilian with such warmth of sympathising zeal, as drew a flood from his eyes, while he wrung his benefactor's hand in a transport of gratitude. Those were literally tears of joy, or at least of satisfaction, on both sides; as our hero wept with affection and attachment to the jewels that were to be committed to his care; but, far from discovering the true source of his tenderness, he affected to dissuade the Spaniard from parting with the diamonds, which he counselled him to reserve for a more pressing occasion; and, in the meantime, earnestly entreated him to depend upon his friendship for present relief.

This generous proffer served only to confirm Don Diego's resolution, which he forthwith executed, by putting into the hands of Ferdinand jewels to the

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value of a thousand crowns, and desiring him to detain for his own use any part of the sum they would raise. Our adventurer thanked him for the good opinion he entertained of his integrity, an opinion fully manifested in honouring him with such important confidence, and assured him he would transact his affairs with the utmost diligence, caution, and despatch. The evening being by this time almost consumed, these new allies retired separately to rest; though each passed the night without repose, in very different reflections, the Castilian being, as usual, agitated with the unceasing pangs of his unalterable misery, interspersed with gleaming hopes of revenge; and Fathom being kept awake with revolving plans for turning his fellow-lodger's credulity to his own advantage. From the nature of the Spaniard's situation, he might have appropriated the jewels to himself, and remained in Paris without fear of a prosecution, because the injured party had, by the above narrative, left his life and liberty at discretion. — But he did not think himself secure from the personal resentment of an enraged desperate Castilian; and therefore determined to withdraw himself privately into that country where he had all along proposed to fix the standard of his finesse, which fortune had now empowered him to exercise according to his wish.

Bent upon this retreat, he went abroad in the morning, on pretence of acting in the concerns of his friend Don Diego, and having hired a post-chaise to be ready at the dawning of next day, returned to his lodgings, where he cajoled the Spaniard with a feigned report of his negotiation; then, securing his

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most valuable effects about his person, arose with the cock, repaired to the place at which he had appointed to meet the postillion with the carriage, and set out for England without further delay, leaving the unhappy Zelos to the horrors of indigence, and the additional agony of this fresh disappointment. Yet he was not the only person affected by the abrupt departure of Fathom, which was hastened by the importunities, threats, and reproaches of his landlord's daughter, whom he had debauched under promise of marriage, and now left in the fourth month of her pregnancy.

Notwithstanding the dangerous adventure in which he had been formerly involved by travelling in the night, he did not think proper to make the usual halts on this journey, for sleep or refreshment, nor did he once quit the chaise till his arrival at Boulogne, which he reached in twenty hours after his departure from Paris. Here he thought he might safely indulge himself with a comfortable meal; accordingly he bespoke a poulard for dinner, and while that was preparing, went forth to view the city and harbour. When he beheld the white cliffs of Albion, his heart throbbed with all the joy of a beloved son, who, after a tedious and fatiguing voyage, reviews the chimneys of his father's house. He surveyed the neighbouring coast of England with fond and longing eyes, like another Moses, reconnoitring the land of Canaan from the top of Mount Pisgah; and to such a degree of impatience was he inflamed by the sight, that, instead of proceeding to Calais, he resolved to take his passage directly from Boulogne, even if he should hire a vessel

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for the purpose. With these sentiments, he inquired if there was any ship bound for England, and was so fortunate as to find the master of a small bark, who intended to weigh anchor for Deal that same evening at high water.

Transported with this information, he immediately agreed for his passage, sold the post-chaise to his landlord for thirty guineas, as a piece of furniture for which he could have no further use, purchased a portmanteau, together with some linen and wearing apparel, and, at the recommendation of his host, took into his service an extra postillion or helper, who had

formerly worn the livery of a travelling marquis. This new domestic, whose name was Maurice, underwent, with great applause, the examination of our hero, who perceived in him a fund of sagacity and presence of mind, by which he was excellently qualified for being the valet of an adventurer. He was therefore accommodated with a second-hand suit and another shirt, and at once listed under the banners of Count Fathom, who spent the whole afternoon in giving him proper instructions for the regulation of his conduct.

Having settled these preliminaries to his own satisfaction, he and his baggage were embarked about six o'clock in the month of September, and it was not without emotion that he found himself brought upon the great deep, of which, before the preceding day, he had never enjoyed even the most distant

This new domestic, whose name was Maurice, underwent, with great applause, the examination of our hero

prospect. However, [illegible] where there was really no appearance of danger, [illegible] the agreeable presages of future fortune support.

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This merry democratic, school name was Maurice, under-
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his spirits, amidst the disagreeable nausea which commonly attends landsmen at sea, until he was set ashore upon the beach at Deal, which he entered in good health about seven o'clock in the morning.

Like Cæsar, however, he found some difficulty in landing, on account of the swelling surf, that tumbled about with such violence as had almost overset the cutter that carried him on shore; and, in his eagerness to jump upon the strand, his foot slipped from the side of the boat, so that he was thrown forwards in an horizontal direction, and his hands were the first parts of him that touched English ground. Upon this occasion, he, in imitation of Scipio's behaviour on the coast of Africa, hailed the omen, and, grasping a handful of the sand, was heard to exclaim, in the Italian language: "Ah, ah, Old England, I have thee fast."

As he walked up to the inn, followed by Maurice loaded with his portmanteau, he congratulated himself upon his happy voyage, and the peaceable possession of his spoil, and could not help snuffing up the British air with marks of infinite relish and satisfaction. His first care was to recompense himself for the want of sleep he had undergone, and, after he had sufficiently recruited himself with several hours of uninterrupted repose, he set out in a post-chaise for Canterbury, where he took a place in the London stage, which he was told would depart next morning, the coach being already full. On this very first day of his arrival, he perceived between the English and the people among whom he had hitherto lived, such essential difference in customs, appearance, and way

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of living, as inspired him with high notions of that British freedom, opulence, and convenience, on which he had often heard his mother expatiate. On the road, he feasted his eyesight with the verdant hills covered with flocks of sheep, the fruitful vales parcelled out into cultivated enclosures; the very cattle seemed to profit by the wealth of their masters, being large, sturdy, and sleek, and every peasant breathed the insolence of liberty and independence. In a word, he viewed the wide-extended plains of Kent with a lover's eye, and, his ambition becoming romantic, could not help fancying himself another conqueror of the isle.

He was not, however, long amused by these vain chimeras, which soon vanished before other reflections of more importance and solidity. His imagination, it must be owned, was at all times too chaste to admit those overweening hopes, which often mislead the mind of the projector. He had studied mankind with incredible diligence, and knew perfectly well how far he could depend on the passions and foibles of human nature. That he might now act consistent with his former sagacity, he resolved to pass himself upon his fellow-travellers for a French gentleman, equally a stranger to the language and country of England, in order to glean from their discourse such intelligence as might avail him in his future operations; and his lacquey was tutored accordingly.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

SOME ACCOUNT OF HIS FELLOW-TRAVELLERS.

THOSE who had taken places for the coach, understanding the sixth seat was engaged by a foreigner, determined to profit by his ignorance; and, with that politeness which is peculiar to this happy island, fixed themselves in the vehicle, in such a manner, before he had the least intimation of their design, that he found it barely practicable to insinuate himself sidelong between a corpulent quaker and a fat Wapping landlady, in which attitude he stuck fast, like a thin quarto between two voluminous dictionaries on a bookseller's shelf. And, as if the pain and inconvenience of such compression was not sufficient matter of chagrin, the greatest part of the company entertained themselves with laughing at his ludicrous station.

The jolly dame at his left hand observed, with a loud exclamation of mirth, that monsieur would be soon better acquainted with a buttock of English beef; and said, by that time they should arrive at their dining-place, he might be spitted without larding. "Yes, verily," replied Obadiah, who was a wag in his way, "but the swine's fat will be all on one side."—"So much the better for you," cried mine

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hostess, "for that side is all your own." The quaker was not so much disconcerted by the quickness of this repartee, but that he answered with great deliberation, "I thank thee for thy love, but will not profit by thy loss, especially as I like not the savour of these outlandish fowls; they are profane birds of passage, relished only by the children of vanity, like thee."

The plump gentlewoman took umbrage at this last expression, which she considered as a double reproach, and repeated the words, "Children of vanity!" with an emphasis of resentment. "I believe, if the truth were known," said she, "there's more vanity than midriff in that great belly of yours, for all your pretending to humility and religion. Sirrah! my corporation is made up of good, wholesome, English fat; but you are puffed up with the wind of vanity and delusion; and when it begins to gripe your entrails, you pretend to have a motion, and then get up and preach nonsense. Yet you'll take it upon you to call your betters children. Marry come up, Mr. Goosecap, I have got children that are as good men as you, or any hypocritical trembler in England."

A person who sat opposite to the quaker, hearing this remonstrance, which seemed pregnant with contention, interposed in the conversation with a conscious leer, and begged there might be no rupture between the spirit and the flesh. By this remonstrance he relieved Obadiah from the satire of this female orator, and brought the whole vengeance of her elocution upon his own head. "Flesh!" cried she,

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with all the ferocity of an enraged Thalestris; "none of your names, Mr. Yellowchaps. What! I warrant you have an antipathy to flesh, because you yourself are nothing but skin and bone. I suppose you are some poor starved journeyman tailor come from France, where you have been learning to cabbage, and have not seen a good meal of victuals these seven years. You have been living upon rye-bread and soup-maigre, and now you come over like a walking atomy with a rat's tail at your wig, and a tinsey-jacket. And so, forsooth, you set up for a gentleman, and pretend to find fault with a sirloin of roast beef."

The gentleman heard this address with admirable patience, and when she had rung out her alarm, very coolly replied, "Anything but your stinking fish madam. Since when, I pray, have you travelled in stage-coaches, and left off your old profession of crying oysters in winter, and rotten mackerel in June? You was then known by the name of Kate Brawn, and in good repute among the ale-houses in Thames Street, till that unlucky amour with the master of a corn-vessel, in which he was unfortunately detected by his own spouse; but you seem to have risen by that fall; and I wish you joy of your present plight. Though, considering your education on Bear Quay, you can give but a sorry account of yourself."

The Amazon, though neither exhausted nor dismayed, was really confounded at the temper and assurance of this antagonist, who had gathered all these anecdotes from the fertility of his own invention; after a short pause, however, she poured forth a torrent of

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obloquy sufficient to overwhelm any person who had not been used to take up arms against such seas of trouble; and a dispute ensued, which would have not only disgraced the best orators on the Thames, but even have made a figure in the celebration of the Eleusinian mysteries, during which the Athenian matrons rallied one another from different waggons, with that freedom of altercation so happily preserved in this our age and country.

Such a redundancy of epithets, and variety of metaphors, tropes, and figures were uttered between these well-matched opponents, that an epic bard would have found his account in listening to the contest; which, in all probability, would not have been confined to words, had it not been interrupted for the sake of a young woman of an agreeable countenance and modest carriage; who, being shocked at some of their flowers of speech, and terrified by the menacing looks and gestures of the fiery-featured dame, began to scream aloud, and beg leave to quit the coach. Her perturbation put an end to the high debate. The sixth passenger, who had not opened his mouth, endeavoured to comfort her with assurances of protection; the quaker proposed a cessation of arms; the male disputant acquiesced in the proposal, assuring the company he had entered the lists for their entertainment only, without acquiring the least grudge or ill-will to the fat gentlewoman, whom he protested he had never seen before that day, and who, for aught he knew, was a person of credit and reputation. He then held forth his hand in token of amity, and asked pardon of the offended party, who was appeased

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by his submission; and, in testimony of her benevolence, presented to the other female, whom she had discomposed, an Hungary-water bottle filled with cherry-brandy, recommending it as a much more powerful remedy than the sal-volatile which the other held to her nose.

Peace being thus re-established, in a treaty comprehending Obadiah and all present, it will not be improper to give the reader some further information, touching the several characters assembled in this vehicle. The quaker was a London merchant, who had been at Deal superintending the repairs of a ship which had suffered by a storm in the Downs. The Wapping landlady was on her return from the same place, where she had attended the payment of a man-of-war, with sundry powers of attorney, granted by the sailors, who had lived upon credit at her house. Her competitor in fame was a dealer in wine, a smuggler of French lace, and a petty gamester just arrived from Paris, in the company of an English barber, who sat on his right hand, and the young woman was daughter of a country curate, in her way to London, where she was bound apprentice to a milliner.

Hitherto Fathom had sat in silent astonishment at the manners of his fellow-travellers, which far exceeded the notions he had preconceived of English plainness and rusticity. He found himself a monument of that disregard and contempt which a stranger never fails to meet with from the inhabitants of this island; and saw, with surprise, an agreeable young creature sit as solitary and unheeded as himself.

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He was, indeed, allured by the roses of her complexion, and the innocence of her aspect, and began to repent of having pretended ignorance of the language, by which he was restrained from exercising his eloquence upon her heart; he resolved, however, to ingratiate himself, if possible, by the courtesy and politeness of dumb show, and for that purpose put his eyes in motion without farther delay.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

ANOTHER PROVIDENTIAL DELIVERANCE FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE SMUGGLER'S INGENIOUS CONJECTURE.

DURING these deliberations, the wine merchant, with a view to make a parade of his superior parts and breeding, as well as to pave the way for a match at backgammon, made a tender of his snuff-box to our adventurer, and asked, in bad French, how he travelled from Paris. This question produced a series of interrogations concerning the place of Ferdinand's abode in that city, and his business in England, so that he was fain to practise the science of defence, and answered with such ambiguity, as aroused the suspicion of the smuggler, who began to believe our hero had some very cogent reason for evading his curiosity; he immediately set his reflection at work, and, after various conjectures, fixed upon Fathom's being the Young Pretender. Big with this supposition, he eyed him with the most earnest attention, comparing his features with those of the Chevalier's portrait which he had seen in France, and though the faces were as unlike as any two human faces could be, found the resemblance so striking as to dispel all his doubts, and persuade

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him to introduce the stranger to some justice on the road; a step by which he would not only manifest his zeal for the Protestant succession, but also acquire the splendid reward proposed by parliament to any person who should apprehend that famous adventurer.

These ideas intoxicated the brain of this man to such a pitch of enthusiasm, that he actually believed himself in possession of the thirty thousand pounds, and amused his fancy with a variety of magnificent projects to be executed by means of that acquisition, until his reverie was interrupted by the halting of the coach at the inn where the passengers used to eat their breakfasts. Waked as he was from the dream of happiness, it had made such impression upon his mind, that, seeing Fathom rise up with an intention to alight, he took it for granted his design was to escape, and seizing him by the collar, called aloud for assistance in the King's name.

Our hero, whose sagacity and presence of mind very often supplied the place of courage, instead of being terrified at this assault, which might have disturbed the tranquillity of an ordinary villain, was so perfectly master of every circumstance of his own situation, as to know at once that the aggressor could not possibly have the least cause of complaint against him; and therefore, imputing this violence either to madness or mistake, very deliberately suffered himself to be made prisoner by the people of the house, who ran to the coach door in obedience to the summons of the wine merchant. The rest of the company were struck dumb with surprise and consterna-

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tion at this sudden adventure; and the quaker, dreading some fell resistance on the side of the outlandish man, unpinned the other coach door in the twinkling of an eye, and trundled himself into the mud for safety. The others, seeing the temper and resignation of the prisoner, soon recovered their recollection, and began to inquire into the cause of his arrest, upon which, the captor, whose teeth chattered with terror and impatience, gave them to understand that he was a state criminal, and demanded their help in conveying him to justice.

Luckily for both parties, there happened to be at the inn a company of squires just returned from the death of a leash of hares, which they had ordered to be dressed for dinner, and among these gentlemen was one of the quorum, to whom the accuser had immediate recourse, marching before the captive, who walked very peaceably between the landlord and one of his waiters, and followed by a crowd of spectators, some of whom had secured the faithful Maurice, who in his behaviour closely imitated the deliberation of his master. In this order did the procession advance to the apartment in which the magistrate, with his fellows of the chase, sat smoking his morning pipe over a tankard of strong ale, and the smuggler being directed to the right person, "May it please your worship," said he, "I have brought this foreigner before you, on a violent suspicion of his being a proclaimed outlaw; and I desire, before these witnesses, that my title may be made good to the reward that shall become due upon his conviction."

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"Friend," replied the justice, "I know nothing of you or your titles; but this I know, if you have any information to give in, you must come to my house when I am at home, and proceed in a lawful way, that is, d'ye mind me, if you swear as how this here person is an outlaw; then if so be as he has nothing to say to the contrary, my clerk shall make out a mittimus, and so to jail with him till next 'size." "But, sir," answered the impeacher, "this is a case that admits of no delay; the person I have apprehended is a prisoner of consequence to the state." "How, fellor!" cried the magistrate, interrupting him, "is there any person of more consequence than one of his Majesty's justices of the peace, who is besides a considerable member of the landed interest! D'ye know, sirrah, who you are talking to? If you don't go about your business, I believe I shall lay you by the heels."

The smuggler, fearing his prize would escape through the ignorance, pride, and obstinacy of this country justice, approached his worship, and in a whisper which was overheard by all the company, assured him he had indubitable reason to believe the foreigner was no other than the Pretender's eldest son. At mention of this formidable name, every individual of the audience started, with signs of terror and amazement. The justice dropped his pipe, recoiled upon his chair, and, looking most ridiculously aghast, exclaimed, "Seize him, in the name of God and his Majesty King George! Has he got no secret arms about him!"

Fathom being thus informed of the suspicion under

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which he stood, could not help smiling at the eagerness with which the spectators flew upon him, and suffered himself to be searched with great composure, well knowing they would find no moveables about his person, but such as upon examination would turn to his account; he therefore very calmly presented to the magistrate his purse, and a small box that contained his jewels, and in the French language desired they might be preserved from the hands of the mob. This request was interpreted by the accuser, who, at the same time, laid claim to the booty. The justice took charge of the deposit, and one of his neighbours having undertaken the office of clerk, he proceeded to the examination of the culprit, whose papers were by this time laid on the table before him. "Stranger," said he, "you stand charged with being son of the Pretender to these realms; what have you to say in your own defence?" Our hero assured him, in the French language, that he was falsely impeached, and demanded justice on the accuser, who, without the least reason, had made such a malicious attack upon the life and honour of an innocent gentleman.

The smuggler, instead of acting the part of a faithful interpreter, told his worship, that the prisoner's answer was no more than a simple denial, which every felon would make who had nothing else to plead in his own behalf, and that this alone was a strong presumption of his guilt, because, if he was not really the person they suspected him to be, the thing would speak for itself, for, if he was not the Young Pretender, who then was he? This argu-

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ment had great weight with the justice, who, assuming a very important aspect, observed, "Very true, friend, if you are not the Pretender, in the name of God, who are you? One may see with half an eye that he is no better than a promiscuous fellow."

Ferdinand now began to repent of having pretended ignorance of the English language, as he found himself at the mercy of a rascal, who put a false gloss upon all his words, and addressed himself to the audience successively in French, High Dutch, Italian, and Hungarian Latin, desiring to know if any person present understood any of these tongues, that his answers might be honestly explained to the bench. But he might have accosted them in Chinese with the same success: there was not one person present tolerably versed in his mother-tongue, much less acquainted with any foreign language, except the wine merchant, who, incensed at this appeal, which he considered as an affront to his integrity, gave the judge to understand, that the delinquent, instead of speaking to the purpose, contumaciously insulted his authority in sundry foreign lingos, which he apprehended was an additional proof of his being the Chevalier's son, inasmuch as no person would take the pains to learn such a variety of gibberish, except with some sinister intent.

This annotation was not lost upon the squire, who was too jealous of the honour of his office to overlook such a flagrant instance of contempt. His eyes glistened, his cheeks were inflated with rage. "The case is plain," said he; "having nothing of signification to offer in his own favour, he grows refractory,

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and abuses the court in his base Roman Catholic jargon; but I 'll let you know, for all you pretend to be a prince, you are no better than an outlawed vagrant, and I 'll show you what a thing you are when you come in composition with an English justice, like me, who have more than once extinguished myself in the service of my country. As nothing else accrues, your purse, black box, and papers shall be sealed up before witnesses, and sent by express to one of his Majesty's secretaries of state; and, as for yourself, I will apply to the military at Canterbury, for a guard to conduct you to London."

This was a very unwelcome declaration to our adventurer, who was on the point of haranguing the justice and spectators in their own language, when he was relieved from the necessity of taking that step by the interposition of a young nobleman just arrived at the inn, who, being informed of this strange examination, entered the court, and, at first sight of the prisoner, assured the justice he was imposed upon; for that he himself had often seen the Young Pretender in Paris, and that there was no kind of resemblance between that adventurer and the person now before him. The accuser was not a little mortified at his lordship's affirmation, which met with all due regard from the bench, though the magistrate took notice, that, granting the prisoner was not the Young Chevalier himself, it was highly probable he was an emissary of that house, as he could give no satisfactory account of himself, and was possessed of things of such value as no honest man could expose to the accidents of the road.

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Fathom, having thus found an interpreter, who signified to him, in the French tongue, the doubts of the justice, told his lordship, that he was a gentleman of a noble house in Germany, who, for certain reasons, had come abroad incognito, with a view to see the world; and that, although the letters they had seized would prove the truth of that assertion, he should be loth to expose his private concerns to the knowledge of strangers, if he could possibly be released without that mortification. The young nobleman explained his desire to the court; but, his own curiosity being interested, observed, at the same time, that the justice could not be said to have discharged the duties of his station, until he should have examined every circumstance relating to the prisoner. Upon which remonstrance, he was requested by the bench to peruse the papers, and accordingly communicated the substance of one letter to this effect: —

"My dear Son, — Though I am far from approving the rash step you have taken in withdrawing yourself from your father's house, in order to avoid an engagement which would have been equally honourable and advantageous to your family, I cannot so far suppress my affection, as to bear the thought of your undergoing those hardships which, for your disobedience, you deserve to suffer. I have therefore, without the knowledge of your father, sent the bearer to attend you in your peregrinations; his fidelity you know hath been tried in a long course of service, and I have entrusted to his care, for your use, a purse of two hundred ducats, and a box of jewels to the value of twice that sum, which, though not sufficient to support an equipage suitable to

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your birth, will, at least for some time, preserve you from the importunities of want. When you are dutiful enough to explain your designs and situation, you may expect further indulgence from your tender and disconsolate mother,—

"COUNTESS OF FATHOM."

This letter, which, as well as the others, our hero had forged for the purpose, effectually answered his intent, in throwing dust in the eyes and understanding of the spectators, who now regarded the prisoner with looks of respectful remorse, as a man of quality who had been falsely accused. His lordship, to make a parade of his own politeness and importance, assured the bench, he was no stranger to the family of the Fathoms, and, with a compliment, gave Ferdinand to understand he had formerly seen him at Versailles. There being no longer room for suspicion, the justice ordered our adventurer to be set at liberty, and even invited him to be seated, with an apology for the rude manner in which he had been treated, owing to the misinformation of the accuser, who was threatened with the stocks, for his malice and presumption.

But this was not the only triumph our hero obtained over the wine merchant. Maurice was no sooner unfettered, than, advancing into the middle of the room, "My lord," said he, addressing himself in French to his master's deliverer, "since you have been so generous as to protect a noble stranger from the danger of such a false accusation, I hope you will still lay an additional obligation upon the Count, by retorting the vengeance of the law upon his perfidious

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accuser, whom I know to be a trader in those articles of merchandise which are prohibited by the ordinances of this nation. I have seen him lately at Boulogne, and am perfectly well acquainted with some persons who have supplied him with French lace and embroidery; and, as a proof of what I allege, I desire you will order him and this barber, who is his understrapper, to be examined on the spot."

This charge, which was immediately explained to the bench, yielded extraordinary satisfaction to the spectators, one of whom, being an officer of the customs, forthwith began to exercise his function upon the unlucky perruquier, who, being stripped of his upper garments, and even of his shirt, appeared like the mummy of an Egyptian king, most curiously rolled up in bandages of rich figured gold shalloon, that covered the skirts of four embroidered waistcoats. The merchant, seeing his expectation so unhappily reversed, made an effort to retire with a most rueful aspect, but was prevented by the officer, who demanded the interposition of the civil power, that he might undergo the same examination to which the other had been subjected. He was accordingly rifled without loss of time, and the inquiry proved well worth the care of him who made it; for a considerable booty of the same sort of merchandise was found in his boots, breeches, hat, and between the buckram and lining of his surtout. Yet, not contented with this prize, the experienced spoiler proceeded to search his baggage, and, perceiving a false bottom in his portmanteau, detected beneath it a valuable accession to the plunder he had already obtained.

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CHAPTER THIRTY

THE SINGULAR MANNER OF FATHOM'S ATTACK AND TRIUMPH OVER THE VIRTUE OF THE FAIR ELENOR.

PROPER cognisance being thus taken of these contraband effects, and the informer furnished with a certificate, by which he was entitled to a share of the seizure, the coachman summoned his passengers to the carriage; the purse and jewels were restored to Count Fathom, who thanked the justice, and his lordship in particular, for the candour and hospitality with which he had been treated, and resumed his place in the vehicle, amidst the congratulations of all his fellow-travellers, except the two forlorn smugglers, who, instead of re-embarking in the coach, thought proper to remain at the inn, with view to mitigate, if possible, the severity of their misfortune.

Among those who felicitated Fathom upon the issue of this adventure, the young maiden seemed to express the most sensible pleasure at that event. The artful language of his eyes had raised in her breast certain fluttering emotions, before she knew the value of her conquest; but now that his rank and condition were discovered, these transports were increased by the ideas of vanity and ambition, which are mingled with the first seeds of every female con-

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stitution. The belief of having captivated the heart of a man who could raise her to the rank and dignity of a countess, produced such agreeable sensations in her fancy, that her eyes shone with unusual lustre, and a continual smile played in dimples on her rosy cheeks; so that her attractions, though not powerful enough to engage the affection, were yet sufficient to inflame the desire of our adventurer, who very honestly marked her chastity for prey to his voluptuous passion. Had she been well seasoned with knowledge and experience, and completely armed with caution against the artifice and villany of man, her virtue might not have been able to withstand the engines of such an assailant, considering the dangerous opportunities to which she was necessarily exposed. How easy then must his victory have been over an innocent, unsuspecting country damsel, flushed with the warmth of youth, and an utter stranger to the ways of life!

While Obadiah, therefore, and his plump companion, were engaged in conversation, on the strange incidents which had passed, Fathom acted a very expressive pantomime with this fair buxom nymph, who comprehended his meaning with surprising facility, and was at so little pains to conceal the pleasure she took in this kind of intercourse, that several warm squeezes were interchanged between her and her lover, before they arrived at Rochester, where they proposed to dine. It was during this period, he learned from the answers she made to the inquisitive quaker, that her sole dependence was upon a relation, to whom she had a letter, and that

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she was a perfect stranger in the great city; circumstances on which he soon formed the project of her ruin.

Upon their arrival at the Black Bull, he for the first time found himself alone with his Amanda, whose name was Elenor, their fellow-travellers being elsewhere employed about their own concerns; and, unwilling to lose the precious opportunity, he began to act the part of a very importunate lover, which he conceived to be a proper sequel to the prelude which had been performed in the coach. The freedoms which she, out of pure simplicity and good-humour, permitted him to take with her hand, and even her rosy lips, encouraged him to practise other familiarities upon her fair bosom, which scandalised her virtue so much, that, in spite of the passion she had begun to indulge in his behalf, she rejected his advances with all the marks of anger and disdain; and he found it necessary to appease the storm he had raised, by the most respectful and submissive demeanour; resolving to change his operations, and carry on his attacks, so as to make her yield at discretion, without alarming her religion or pride. Accordingly, when the bill was called after dinner, he took particular notice of her behaviour, and, perceiving her pull out a large leathern purse that contained her money, reconnoitred the pocket in which it was deposited, and, while they sat close to each other in the carriage, conveyed it with admirable dexterity into an hole in the cushion. Whether the corpulent couple, who sat opposite to these lovers, had entered into an amorous engagement at the inn,

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or were severally induced by other motives, is uncertain; but sure it is, both left the coach on that part of the road which lies nearest to Gravesend, and bade adieu to the other pair, on pretence of having urgent business at that place.

Ferdinand, not a little pleased at their departure, renewed his most pathetic expressions of love, and sung several French songs on that tender subject, which seemed to thrill to the soul of his beauteous Helen. While the driver halted at Dartford to water his horses, she was smit with the appearance of some cheesecakes, which were presented by the landlady of the house, and having bargained for two or three, put her hand in her pocket, in order to pay for her purchase; but what was her astonishment, when, after having rummaged her equipage, she understood her whole fortune was lost! This mishap was, by a loud shriek, announced to our hero, who affected infinite amazement and concern; and no sooner learned the cause of her affliction, than he presented her with his own purse, from which he, in emphatic dumb show, begged she would indemnify herself for the damage she had sustained. Although this kind proffer was some alleviation of her misfortunes, she did not fail to pour forth a most piteous lamentation, importing that she had not only lost all her money, amounting to five pounds, but also her letter of recommendation, upon which she had altogether relied for present employment.

The vehicle was minutely searched from top to bottom, by herself and our adventurer, assisted by Maurice and the coachman, who, finding their

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inquiry ineffectual, did not scruple to declare his suspicion of the two fat turtles who had deserted the coach in such an abrupt manner. In a word, he rendered this conjecture so plausible, by wresting the circumstances of their behaviour and retreat, that poor Elenor implicitly believed they were the thieves by whom she had suffered; and was prevailed upon to accept the proffered assistance of the generous Count, who, seeing her very much disordered by this mischance, insisted upon her drinking a large glass of canary, to quiet the perturbation of her spirits. This is a season, which of all others is most propitious to the attempts of an artful lover; and justifies the metaphorical maxim of fishing in troubled waters. There is an affinity and short transition betwixt all the violent passions that agitate the human mind. They are all false perspectives, which, though they magnify, yet perplex and render indistinct every object which they represent. And flattery is never so successfully administered, as to those who know they stand in need of friendship, assent, and approbation.

The cordial she swallowed, far from calming, increased the disturbance of her thoughts, and produced an intoxication; during which, she talked in an incoherent strain, laughed and wept by turns, and acted other extravagances, which are known to be symptoms of the hysterical affection. Fathom, though an utter stranger to the sentiments of honour, pity, and remorse, would not perpetrate his vicious purpose, though favoured by the delirium his villany had entailed upon this unfortunate young maiden;

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because his appetite demanded a more perfect sacrifice than that which she could yield in her present deplorable situation, when her will must have been altogether unconcerned in his success. Determined, therefore, to make a conquest of her virtue, before he would take possession of her person, he mimicked that compassion and benevolence which his heart had never felt, and, when the coach arrived at London, not only discharged what she owed for her place, but likewise procured for her an apartment in the house to which he himself had been directed for lodgings, and even hired a nurse to attend her during a severe fever, which was the consequence of her disappointment and despondence. Indeed, she was supplied with all necessaries by the generosity of this noble Count, who, for the interest of his passion, and the honour of his name, was resolved to extend his charity to the last farthing of her own money, which he had been wise enough to secure for this purpose.

Her youth soon got the better of her distemper, and when she understood her obligations to the Count, who did not fail to attend her in person with great tenderness, her heart, which had been before prepossessed in his favour, now glowed with all the warmth of gratitude, esteem, and affection. She knew herself in a strange place, destitute of all resource but in his generosity. She loved his person, she was dazzled by his rank; and he knew so well how to improve the opportunities and advantages he derived from her unhappy situation, that he gradually proceeded in sapping from one degree of intimacy to

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another, until all the bulwarks of her chastity were undermined, and she submitted to his desire; not with the reluctance of a vanquished people, but with all the transports of a joyful city, that opens its gates to receive a darling prince returned from conquest. For by this time he had artfully concentred and kindled up all the inflammable ingredients of her constitution; and she now looked back upon the virtuous principles of her education, as upon a disagreeable and tedious dream, from which she had waked to the fruition of never-fading joy.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

HE BY ACCIDENT ENCOUNTERS HIS OLD FRIEND, WITH WHOM HE HOLDS A CONFERENCE, AND RENEWS A TREATY.

OUR hero, having thus provided himself with a proper subject for his hours of dalliance, thought it was now high time to study the ground which he had pitched upon for the scene of his exploits, and with that view made several excursions to different parts of the town, where there was aught of entertainment or instruction to be found. Yet he always, on these occasions, appeared in an obscure ordinary dress, in order to avoid singularity, and never went twice to the same coffee-house, that his person might not be afterwards known, in case he should shine forth to the public in a superior sphere. On his return from one of those expeditions, while he was passing through Ludgate, his eyes were suddenly encountered by the apparition of his old friend the Tyrolese, who, perceiving himself fairly caught in the toil, made a virtue of necessity, and, running up to our adventurer with an aspect of eagerness and joy, clasped him in his arms, as some dear friend, whom he had casually found after a most tedious and disagreeable separation.

Fathom, whose genius never failed him in such emergencies, far from receiving these advances with

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the threats and reproaches which the other had deserved at his hands, returned the salute with equal warmth, and was really overjoyed at meeting with a person who might one way or other make amends for the perfidy of his former conduct. The Tyrolese, whose name was Ratchcali, pleased with his reception, proposed they should adjourn to the next tavern, in which they had no sooner taken possession of an apartment, than he addressed himself to his old companion in these words: —

"Mr. Fathom, by your frank and obliging manner of treating a man who hath done you wrong, I am more and more confirmed in my opinion of your sagacity, which I have often considered with admiration; I will not therefore attempt to make an apology for my conduct at our last parting; but only assure you that this meeting may turn out to our mutual advantage, if we now re-enter into an unreserved union, the ties of which we will soon find it our interest and inclination to preserve. For my own part, as my judgment is ripened by experience, so are my sentiments changed since our last association. I have seen many a rich harvest lost, for want of a fellow-labourer in the vineyard; and I have more than once fallen a sacrifice to a combination, which I could have resisted with the help of one able auxiliary. Indeed, I might prove what I allege by mathematical demonstration; and I believe nobody will pretend to deny, that two heads are better than one, in all cases that require discernment and deliberation."

Ferdinand could not help owning the sanity of

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his observations, and forthwith acquiesced in his proposal of the new alliance; desiring to know the character in which he acted on the English stage, and the scheme he would offer for their mutual emolument. At the same time he resolved within himself to keep such a strict eye over his future actions, as would frustrate any design he might hereafter harbour, of repeating the prank he had so successfully played upon him, in their journey from the banks of the Rhine.

"Having quitted you at Bar-le-duc," resumed the Tyrolese, "I travelled without ceasing, until I arrived at Frankfort upon the Maine, where I assumed the character of a French chevalier, and struck some masterly strokes, which you yourself would not have deemed unworthy of your invention; and my success was the more agreeable, as my operations were chiefly carried on against the enemies of our religion. But my prosperity was not of long duration. Seeing they could not foil me at my own weapons, they formed a damned conspiracy, by which I not only lost all the fruits of my industry, but likewise ran the most imminent hazard of my life. I had ordered some of those jewels which I had borrowed of my good friend Fathom to be new set in a fashionable taste, and soon after had an opportunity to sell one of these, at a great advantage, to one of the fraternity, who offered an extraordinary price for the stone, on purpose to effect my ruin. In less than four-and-twenty hours after this bargain, I was arrested by the officers of justice upon the oath of the purchaser, who undertook to prove me guilty of a fraud, in selling a

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Saxon pebble for a real diamond; and this accusation was actually true; for the change had been artfully put upon me by the jeweller, who was himself engaged in the conspiracy.

"Had my conscience been clear of any other impeachment, perhaps I should have rested my cause upon the equity and protection of the law; but I foresaw that the trial would introduce an inquiry, to which I was not at all ambitious of submitting, and therefore was fain to compromise the affair, at the price of almost my whole fortune. Yet this accommodation was not made so secretly, but that my character was blasted, and my credit overthrown; so that I was fain to relinquish my occasional equipage, and hire myself as journeyman to a lapidary, an employment which I had exercised in my youth. In this obscure station, I laboured with great assiduity, until I made myself perfect in the knowledge of stones, as well as in the different methods of setting them off to the best advantage; and having, by dint of industry and address, got possession of a small parcel, set out for this kingdom, in which I happily arrived about four months ago; and surely England is the paradise of artists of our profession.

"One would imagine that nature had created the inhabitants for the support and enjoyment of adventurers like you and me. Not that these islanders open the arms of hospitality to all foreigners without distinction. On the contrary, they inherit from their fathers an unreasonable prejudice against all nations under the sun; and when an Englishman happens to quarrel with a stranger, the first term of reproach he

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uses is the name of his antagonist's country, characterised by some opprobrious epithet, such as a chattering Frenchman, an Italian ape, a German hog, and a beastly Dutchman; nay, their national prepossession is maintained even against those people with whom they are united under the same laws and government; for nothing is more common than to hear them exclaim against their fellow-subjects, in the expressions of a beggarly Scot, and an impudent Irish bog-trotter. Yet this very prejudice will never fail to turn to the account of every stranger possessed of ordinary talents; for he will always find opportunities of conversing with them in coffee-houses and places of public resort, in spite of their professed reserve, which, by the bye, is so extraordinary, that I know some people who have lived twenty years in the same house without exchanging one word with their next-door neighbours; yet, provided he can talk sensibly, and preserve the deportment of a sober gentleman, in those occasional conversations, his behaviour will be the more remarkably pleasing, as it will agreeably disappoint the expectation of the person who had entertained notions to his prejudice. When a foreigner has once crossed this bar, which perpetually occurs, he sails without further difficulty into the harbour of an Englishman's goodwill; for the pique is neither personal nor rancorous, but rather contemptuous and national; so that, while he despises a people in the lump, an individual of that very community may be one of his chief favourites.

"The English are in general upright and honest, therefore unsuspecting and credulous. They are too

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much engrossed with their own business to pry into the conduct of their neighbours, and too indifferent, in point of disposition, to interest themselves in what they conceive to be foreign to their own concerns. They are wealthy and mercantile, of consequence liberal and adventurous, and so well disposed to take a man's own word for his importance, that they suffer themselves to be preyed upon by such a bungling set of impostors, as would starve for lack of address in any other country under the sun. This being a true sketch of the British character, so far as I have been able to observe and learn, you will easily comprehend the profits that may be extracted from it, by virtue of those arts by which you so eminently excel; — *the great, the unbounded prospect lies before me!* Indeed, I look upon this opulent kingdom as a wide and fertile common, on which we adventurers may range for prey, without let or molestation. For so jealous are the natives of their liberties, that they will not bear the restraint of necessary *police*, and an able artist may enrich himself with their spoils, without running any risk of attracting the magistrate, or incurring the least penalty of the law.

"In a word, this metropolis is a vast masquerade, in which a man of stratagem may wear a thousand different disguises, without danger of detection. There is a variety of shapes in which we the knights of industry make our appearance in London. One glides into a nobleman's house in the capacity of a valet-de-chambre, and in a few months leads the whole family by the nose. Another exhibits him-

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self to the public, as an empiric or operator for the teeth; and by dint of assurance and affidavits, bearing testimony to wonderful cures that never were performed, whirls himself into his chariot, and lays the town under contribution. A third professes the composition of music, as well as the performance, and by means of a few *capriciosos* on the violin, properly introduced, wriggles himself into the management of private and public concerts. And a fourth breaks forth at once in all the splendour of a gay equipage, under the title and denomination of a foreign count. Not to mention those inferior projectors, who assume the characters of dancers, fencing-masters, and French ushers, or, by renouncing their religion, seek to obtain a provision for life.

"Either of these parts will turn to the account of an able actor; and, as you are equally qualified for all, you may choose that which is most suitable to your own inclination. Though, in my opinion, you was designed by nature to shine in the great world, which, after all, is the most ample field for men of genius; because the game is deeper, and people of fashion being, for the most part, more ignorant, indolent, vain, and capricious, than their inferiors, are of consequence more easily deceived; besides, their morals sit generally so loose about them, that, when a gentleman of our fraternity is discovered in the exercise of his profession, their contempt of his skill is the only disgrace he incurs."

Our hero was so well pleased with this picture, that he longed to peruse the original, and, before

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these two friends parted, they settled all the operations of the campaign. Ratchcali, that same evening, hired magnificent lodgings for Count Fathom, in the court end of the town, and furnished his wardrobe and liveries from the spoils of Monmouth Street; he likewise enlisted another footman and valet-de-chambre into his service, and sent to the apartments divers large trunks, supposed to be filled with the baggage of this foreign nobleman, though, in reality, they contained little else than common lumber.

Next day, our adventurer took possession of his new habitation, after having left to his friend and associate the task of dismissing the unfortunate Elenor, who was so shocked at the unexpected message, that she fainted away; and when she recovered the use of her senses so well as to reflect upon her forlorn condition, she was seized with the most violent transports of grief and dismay, by which her brain was disordered to such a degree, that she grew furious and distracted, and was, by the advice and assistance of the Tyrolese, conveyed into the hospital of Bethlem; where we shall leave her for the present, happily bereft of her reason.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

HE APPEARS IN THE GREAT WORLD WITH UNIVERSAL APPLAUSE AND ADMIRATION.

MEANWHILE, Fathom and his engine were busied in completing his equipage, so that in a few days he had procured a very gay chariot, adorned with painting, gilding, and a coat of arms, according to his own fancy and direction. The first use he made of this vehicle was that of visiting the young nobleman from whom he had received such important civilities on the road, in consequence of an invitation at parting, by which he learned his title and the place of his abode in London.

His lordship was not only pleased, but proud to see such a stranger at his gate, and entertained him with excess of complaisance and hospitality; insomuch that, by his means, our hero soon became acquainted with the whole circle of polite company, by whom he was caressed for his insinuating manners and agreeable conversation. He had thought proper to tell the nobleman, at their first interview in town, that his reasons for concealing his knowledge of the English tongue were now removed, and that he would no longer deny himself the pleasure of

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speaking a language which had been always music to his ear. He had also thanked his lordship for his generous interposition at the inn, which was an instance of that generosity and true politeness which are engrossed by the English people, who leave nought to other nations but the mere shadow of these virtues.

A testimony like this, from the mouth of such a noble stranger, won the heart of the peer, who professed a friendship for him on the spot, and undertook to see justice done to his lacquey, who in a short time was gratified with a share of the seizure which had been made upon his information, amounting to fifty or sixty pounds.

Ferdinand put not forth the whole strength of his accomplishments at once, but contrived to spring a new mine of qualification every day, to the surprise and admiration of all his acquaintance. He was gifted with a sort of elocution, much more specious than solid, and spoke on every subject that occurred in conversation with that familiarity and ease, which, one would think, could only be acquired by long study and application. This plausibility and confidence are faculties really inherited from nature, and effectually serve the possessor, in lieu of that learning which is not to be obtained without infinite toil and perseverance. The most superficial tincture of the arts and sciences in such a juggler, is sufficient to dazzle the understanding of half mankind; and, if managed with circumspection, will enable him even to spend his life among the literati, without once forfeiting the character of a connoisseur.

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Our hero was perfectly master of this legerdemain, which he carried to such a pitch of assurance, as to declare, in the midst of a mathematical assembly, that he intended to gratify the public with a full confutation of Sir Isaac Newton's philosophy, to the nature of which he was as much a stranger as the most savage Hottentot in Africa. His pretensions to profound and universal knowledge were supported not only by this kind of presumption, but also by the facility with which he spoke so many different languages, and the shrewd remarks he had made in the course of his travels and observation.

Among politicians, he settled the balance of power upon a certain footing, by dint of ingenious schemes, which he had contrived for the welfare of Europe. With officers, he reformed the art of war, with improvements which had occurred to his reflection while he was engaged in a military life. He sometimes held forth upon painting, like a member of the *Dilettanti* club. The theory of music was a theme upon which he seemed to expatiate with particular pleasure. In the provinces of love and gallantry, he was a perfect Oroondates. He possessed a most agreeable manner of telling entertaining stories, of which he had a large collection; he sung with great melody and taste, and played upon the violin with surprising execution. To these qualifications let us add his affability and pliant disposition, and then the reader will not wonder that he was looked upon as the pattern of human perfection, and his acquaintance courted accordingly.

While he thus captivated the favour and affection

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of the English nobility, he did not neglect to take other measures in behalf of the partnership to which he had subscribed. The adventure with the two squires at Paris had weakened his appetite for play, which was not at all restored by the observations he had made in London, where the art of gaming is reduced into a regular system, and its professors so laudably devoted to the discharge of their functions, as to observe the most temperate regimen, lest their invention should be impaired by the fatigue of watching or exercise, and their ideas disturbed by the fumes of indigestion. No Indian Brachman could live more abstemious than two of the pack, who hunted in couple, and kennelled in the upper apartments of the hotel in which our adventurer lived. They abstained from animal food with the abhorrence of Pythagoreans, their drink was a pure simple element, they were vomited once a week, took physic or a glyster every third day, spent the forenoon in algebraical calculations, and slept from four o'clock till midnight, that they might then take the field with that cool serenity which is the effect of refreshment and repose.

These were terms upon which our hero would not risk his fortune; he was too much addicted to pleasure to forego every other enjoyment but that of amassing; and did not so much depend upon his dexterity in play as upon his talent of insinuation, which, by this time, had succeeded so far beyond his expectation, that he began to indulge the hope of enslaving the heart of some rich heiress, whose fortune would at once raise him above all dependence.

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Indeed, no man ever set out with a fairer prospect on such an expedition; for he had found means to render himself so agreeable to the fair sex, that, like the boxes of the playhouse, during the representation of a new performance, his company was often bespoke for a series of weeks; and no lady, whether widow, wife, or maiden, ever mentioned his name, without some epithet of esteem or affection; such as *the dear Count! the charming Man! the Nonpareil*, or *the Angel!*

While he thus shone in the zenith of admiration, it is not to be doubted, that he could have melted some wealthy dowager or opulent ward; but, being an enemy to all precipitate engagements, he resolved to act with great care and deliberation in an affair of such importance, especially as he did not find himself hurried by the importunities of want; for, since his arrival in England, he had rather increased than exhausted his finances, by methods equally certain and secure. In a word, he, with the assistance of Ratchcali, carried on a traffic, which yielded great profits, without subjecting the trader to the least loss or inconvenience. Fathom, for example, wore upon his finger a large brilliant, which he played to such advantage one night, at a certain nobleman's house, where he was prevailed upon to entertain the company with a solo on the violin, that everybody present took notice of its uncommon lustre, and it was handed about for the perusal of every individual. The water and the workmanship were universally admired; and one among the rest having expressed a desire of knowing the value of such a jewel, the

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Count seized that opportunity of entertaining them with a learned disquisition into the nature of stones; this introduced the history of the diamond in question, which he said had been purchased of an Indian trader of Fort St. George, at an under price; so that the present proprietor could afford to sell it at a very reasonable rate; and concluded with telling the company, that, for his own part, he had been importuned to wear it by the jeweller, who imagined it would have a better chance for attracting a purchaser on his finger, than while it remained in his own custody.

This declaration was no sooner made, than a certain lady of quality bespoke the refuse of the jewel, and desired Ferdinand to send the owner next day to her house, where he accordingly waited upon her ladyship with the ring, for which he received one hundred and fifty guineas, two-thirds of the sum being clear gain, and equally divided betwixt the associates. Nor was this bargain such as reflected dishonour upon the lady's taste, or could be productive of ill consequences to the merchant; for the method of estimating diamonds is altogether arbitrary; and Ratchcali, who was an exquisite lapidary, had set it in such a manner as would have imposed upon any ordinary jeweller. By these means of introduction, the Tyrolese soon monopolised the custom of a great many noble families, upon which he levied large contributions, without incurring the least suspicion of deceit. He every day, out of pure esteem and gratitude for the honour of their commands, entertained them with the sight of some new

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trinket, which he was never permitted to carry home unsold; and from the profits of each job, a tax was raised for the benefit of our adventurer.

Yet his indultos were not confined to the article of jewels, which constituted only one part of his revenue. By the industry of his understrapper, he procured a number of old crazy fiddles, which were thrown aside as lumber; upon which he counterfeited the Cremona mark, and otherwise cooked them up with great dexterity; so that, when he had occasion to regale the lovers of music, he would send for one of these vamped instruments, and extract from it such tones as quite ravished the hearers; among whom there was always some conceited pretender, who spoke in raptures of the violin, and gave our hero an opportunity of launching out in its praise, and declaring it was the best Cremona he had ever touched. This encomium never failed to inflame the desires of the audience, to some one of whom he was generous enough to part with it at prime cost — that is, for twenty or thirty guineas clear profit; for he was often able to oblige his friends in this manner, because, being an eminent connoisseur, his countenance was solicited by all the musicians, who wanted to dispose of such moveables.

Nor did he neglect the other resources of a skilful virtuoso. Every auction afforded some picture, in which, though it had been overlooked by the ignorance of the times, he recognised the style of a great master, and made a merit of recommending it to some noble friend. This commerce he likewise extended to medals, bronzes, busts, intaglios, and old

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china, and kept divers artificers continually employed in making antiques for the English nobility. Thus he went on with such rapidity of success in all his endeavours, that he himself was astonished at the infatuation he had produced. Nothing was so wretched among the productions of art, that he could not impose upon the world as a capital performance; and so fascinated were the eyes of his admirers, he could easily have persuaded them that a barber's bason was an Etrurian patera, and the cover of a copper pot no other than the shield of Ancus Martius. In short, it was become so fashionable to consult the Count in everything relating to taste and politeness, that not a plan was drawn, not even a house furnished, without his advice and approbation; nay, to such a degree did his reputation in these matters excel, that a particular pattern of paper-hangings was known by the name of Fathom; and his hall was every morning crowded with upholsterers, and other tradesmen, who came, by order of their employers, to learn his choice, and take his directions.

The character and influence he thus acquired, he took care to maintain with the utmost assiduity and circumspection. He never failed to appear the chief personage at all public diversions and private assemblies, not only in conversation and dress, but also in the article of dancing, in which he outstripped all his fellows, as far as in every other genteel accomplishment.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

HE ATTRACTS THE ENVY AND ILL OFFICES OF THE MINOR KNIGHTS OF HIS OWN ORDER, OVER WHOM HE OBTAINS A COMPLETE VICTORY.

SUCH a pre-eminence could not be enjoyed without exciting the malevolence of envy and detraction, in the propagation of which none were so industrious as the brethren of his own order, who had, like him, made a descent upon this island, and could not, without repining, see the whole harvest in the hands of one man, who, with equal art and discretion, avoided all intercourse with their society. In vain they strove to discover his pedigree, and detect the particular circumstances of his life and conversation; all their inquiries were baffled by the obscurity of his origin, and that solitary scheme which he had adopted in the beginning of his career. The whole fruit of their investigation amounted to no more than a certainty that there was no family of any consideration in Europe known by the denomination of Fathom; and this discovery they did not fail to divulge for the benefit of our adventurer, who had by this time taken such firm root in the favour of the great, as to set all those little arts at defiance; and when the report reached

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his ear, actually made his friends merry with the conjectures which had been circulated at his expense.

His adversaries, finding themselves disappointed in this effort, held a consultation to devise other measures against him, and came to a resolution of ending him by the sword, or rather of expelling him from the kingdom by the fear of death, which they hoped he had not courage enough to resist, because his deportment had always been remarkably mild and pacific. It was upon this supposition that they left to the determination of the dice the choice of the person who should execute their plan; and the lot falling upon a Swiss, who, from the station of a foot soldier in the Dutch service, out of which he had been drummed for theft, had erected himself into the rank of a self-created chevalier, this hero fortified himself with a double dose of brandy, and betook himself to a certain noted coffee-house, with an intent to affront Count Fathom in public.

He was lucky enough to find our adventurer sitting at a table in conversation with some persons of the first rank; upon which he seated himself in the next box, and after having intruded himself into their discourse, which happened to turn upon the politics of some German courts, "Count," said he to Ferdinand, in a very abrupt and disagreeable manner of address, "I was last night in company with some gentlemen, among whom a dispute happened about the place of your nativity; pray, what country are you of?" "Sir," answered the other, with great politeness, "I at present have the honour to be of England." "Oho!" replied the chevalier, "I ask your pardon,

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that is to say, you are incog; some people may find it convenient to keep themselves in that situation." "True," said the Count, "but some people are too well known to enjoy that privilege." The Swiss being a little disconcerted at this repartee, which extracted a smile from the audience, after some pause, observed, that persons of a certain class had good reason to drop the remembrance of what they have been; but a good citizen will not forget his country, or former condition. "And a bad citizen," said Fathom, "cannot, if he would, provided he has met with his deserts; a sharper may as well forget the shape of a die, or a discarded soldier the sound of a drum."

As the chevalier's character and story were not unknown, this application raised an universal laugh at his expense, which provoked him to such a degree, that, starting up, he swore Fathom could not have mentioned any object in nature that he himself resembled so much as a drum, which was exactly typified by his emptiness and sound, with this difference, however, that a drum was never noisy till beaten, whereas the Count would never be quiet, until he should have undergone the same discipline. So saying, he laid his hand upon his sword with a menacing look, and walked out as if in expectation of being followed by our adventurer, who suffered himself to be detained by the company, and very calmly took notice, that his antagonist would not be ill pleased at their interposition. Perhaps he would not have comported himself with such ease and deliberation, had not he made such remarks upon the disposition

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of the chevalier, as convinced him of his own safety. He had perceived a perplexity and perturbation in the countenance of the Swiss, when he first entered the coffee-room; his blunt and precipitate way of accosting him seemed to denote confusion and compulsion; and, in the midst of his ferocity, this accurate observer discerned the trepidation of fear. By the help of these signs, his sagacity soon comprehended the nature of his schemes, and prepared accordingly for a formal defiance.

His conjecture was verified next morning by a visit from the chevalier, who, taking it for granted that Fathom would not face an adversary in the field, because he had not followed him from the coffee-house, went to his lodgings with great confidence, and demanded to see the Count upon an affair that would admit of no delay. Maurice, according to his instructions, told him that his master was gone out, but desired he would have the goodness to repose himself in the parlour, till the Count's return, which he expected every moment. Ferdinand, who had taken post in a proper place for observation, seeing his antagonist fairly admitted, took the same road, and appearing before him, wrapped up in a long Spanish cloak, desired to know what had procured him the honour of such an early visit. The Swiss, raising his voice to conceal his agitation, explained his errand, in demanding reparation for the injury his honour had sustained the preceding day, in that odious allusion to a scandalous report which had been raised by the malice of his enemies; and insisted, in a very imperious style, upon his attending him forth-

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with to the nursery in Hyde Park. "Have a little patience," said our adventurer with great composure, "and I will do myself the pleasure to wait upon you in a few moments."

With these words, he rang the bell, and, calling for a bason of water, laid aside his cloak, and displayed himself in his shirt, with a sword in his right hand, which was all over besmeared with recent blood, as if he had just come from the slaughter of a foe. This phenomenon made such an impression upon the astonished chevalier, already discomposed by the resolute behaviour of the Count, that he became jaundiced with terror and dismay, and, while his teeth chattered in his head, told our hero he had hoped, from his known politeness, to have found him ready to acknowledge an injury which might have been the effect of anger or misapprehension, in which case the affair might have been compromised to their mutual satisfaction, without proceeding to those extremities which, among men of honour, are always accounted the last resource. To this representation Ferdinand answered, that the affair had been of the chevalier's own seeking, inasmuch as he had intruded himself into his company, and treated him with the most insolent and unprovoked abuse, which plainly flowed from a premeditated design against his honour and reputation; he, therefore, far from being disposed to own himself in the wrong, would not even accept of a public acknowledgment from him, the aggressor, whom he looked upon as an infamous sharper, and was resolved to chastise accordingly.

Here the conversation was interrupted by the

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arrival of a person who was brought to the door in a chair, and conducted into another apartment, from which a message was brought to the Count, importing, that the stranger desired to speak with him upon business of the last importance. Fathom having chid the servant for admitting people without his order, desired the Swiss to excuse him for a minute longer, and went in to the next room, from whence the following dialogue was overheard by this challenger: — "Count," said the stranger, "you are not ignorant of my pretensions to the heart of that young lady, at whose house I met you yesterday; therefore you cannot be surprised when I declare myself displeased with your visits and behaviour to my mistress, and demand that you will instantly promise to drop the correspondence." "Else what follows?" answered Ferdinand, with a cool and temperate voice. "My resentment and immediate defiance," replied the other; "for the only alternative I propose is, to forego your design upon that lady, or to decide our pretension by the sword."

Our hero, having expressed a regard for this visitant as the son of a gentleman whom he honoured, was at the pains to represent the unreasonableness of his demand, and the folly of his presumption; and earnestly exhorted him to put the issue of his cause upon a more safe and equitable footing. But this admonition, instead of appeasing the wrath, seemed to inflame the resentment of the opponent, who swore he would not leave him until he should have accomplished the purport of his errand. In vain our adventurer requested half an hour for the despatch

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of some urgent business, in which he was engaged with a gentleman in the other parlour. This impetuous rival rejected all the terms he could propose, and even challenged him to decide the controversy upon the spot; an expedient to which the other having assented with reluctance, the door was secured, the swords unsheathed, and a hot engagement ensued, to the inexpressible pleasure of the Swiss, who did not doubt that he himself would be screened from all danger by the event of this rencontre. Nevertheless, his hope was disappointed in the defeat of the stranger, who was quickly disarmed, in consequence of a wound through the sword-arm; upon which occasion Fathom was heard to say, that, in consideration of his youth and family, he had spared his life; but he would not act with the same tenderness towards any other antagonist. He then bound up the limb he had disabled, conducted the vanquished party to his chair, rejoined the chevalier with a serene countenance, and, asking pardon for having detained him so long, proposed they should instantly set out in a hackney-coach for the place of appointment.

The stratagem thus conducted, had all the success the inventor could desire. The fear of the Swiss had risen almost to an ecstasy before the Count quitted the room; but after this sham battle, which had been preconcerted betwixt our adventurer and his friend Ratchcali, the chevalier's terrors were unspeakable. He considered Fathom as a devil incarnate, and went into the coach as a malefactor bound for Tyburn. He would have gladly compounded for the loss of a leg or arm, and entertained some transient gleams

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of hope, that he should escape for half a dozen flesh-wounds, which he would have willingly received as the price of his presumption; but these hopes were banished by the remembrance of that dreadful declaration which he had heard the Count make, after having overcome his last adversary; and he continued under the power of the most unsupportable panic, until the carriage halted at Hyde Park Corner, where he crawled forth in a most piteous and lamentable condition; so that, when they reached the spot, he was scarce able to stand.

Here he made an effort to speak, and propose an accommodation upon a new plan, by which he promised to leave his cause to the arbitrement of those gentlemen who were present at the rupture, and to ask pardon of the Count, provided he should be found guilty of a trespass upon good manners; but this proposal would not satisfy the implacable Ferdinand, who, perceiving the agony of the Swiss, resolved to make the most of the adventure, and giving him to understand he was not a man to be trifled with, desired him to draw without further preamble. Thus compelled, the unfortunate gamester pulled off his coat, and, putting himself in a posture, to use the words of Nym, "winked, and held out his cold iron."

Our adventurer, far from making a gentle use of the advantages he possessed, fiercely attacked him, while he was incapable of making resistance, and, aiming at a fleshy part, ran him through the arm and outside of the shoulder at the very first pass. The chevalier, already stupefied with the horror of

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expectation, no sooner felt his adversary's point in his body than he fell to the ground, and, concluding he was no longer a man for this world, began to cross himself with great devotion; while Fathom walked home deliberately, and in his way sent a couple of chairmen to the assistance of the wounded knight.

This achievement, which could not be concealed from the knowledge of the public, not only furnished the character of Fathom with fresh wreaths of admiration and applause, but likewise effectually secured him from any future attempts of his enemies, to whom the Swiss, for his own sake, had communicated such terrible ideas of his valour, as overawed the whole community.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

HE PERFORMS ANOTHER EXPLOIT, THAT CONVEYS A TRUE IDEA OF HIS GRATITUDE AND HONOUR.

IT was not long after this celebrated victory, that he was invited to spend part of the summer at the house of a country gentleman, who lived about one hundred miles from London, possessed of a very opulent fortune, the greatest part of which was expended in acts of old English hospitality. He had met with our hero by accident at the table of a certain great man, and was so struck with his manner and conversation, as to desire his acquaintance, and cultivate his friendship; and he thought himself extremely happy in having prevailed upon him to pass a few weeks in his family.

Fathom, among his other observations, perceived that there was a domestic uneasiness, occasioned by a very beautiful young creature about the age of fifteen, who resided in the house under the title of the gentleman's niece, though she was in reality his natural daughter, born before his marriage. This circumstance was not unknown to his lady, by whose express approbation he had bestowed particular attention upon the education of the child, whom we shall distinguish by the name of Celinda. Their liberality in this particular had not been misapplied;

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for she not only gave marks of uncommon capacity, but, as she grew up, became more and more amiable in her person, and was now returned from the boarding-school, possessed of every accomplishment that could be acquired by one of her age and opportunities. These qualifications, which endeared her to every other person, excited the jealousy and displeasure of her supposed aunt, who could not bear to see her own children eclipsed by this illegitimate daughter, whom she therefore discountenanced upon all occasions, and exposed to such mortifications as would in all appearance drive her from her father's house. This persecuting spirit was very disagreeable to the husband, who loved Celinda with a truly paternal affection, and produced abundance of family disquiet; but being a man of a peaceable and yielding disposition, he could not long maintain the resolution he had taken in her favour, and therefore he ceased opposing the malevolence of his wife.

In this unfortunate predicament stood the fair bastard, at the arrival of our adventurer, who, being allured by her charms, apprised of her situation at the same time, took the generous resolution to undermine her innocence, that he might banquet his vicious appetite with the spoils of her beauty. Perhaps such a brutal design might not have entered his imagination, if he had not observed, in the disposition of this hapless maiden, certain peculiarities from which he derived the most confident presages of success. Besides a total want of experience, that left her open and unguarded against the attacks of the other sex, she discovered a remarkable spirit of

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credulity and superstitious fear, which had been cherished by the conversation of her schoolfellows. She was particularly fond of music, in which she had made sone progress; but so delicate was the texture of her nerves, that one day, while Fathom entertained the company with a favourite air, she actually swooned with pleasure.

Such sensibility, our projector well knew, must be diffused through all the passions of her heart; he congratulated himself upon the sure ascendency he had gained over her in this particular; and forthwith began to execute the plan he had erected for her destruction. That he might the more effectually deceive the vigilance of her father's wife, he threw such a dash of affectation in his complaisance towards Celinda, as could not escape the notice of that prying matron, though it was not palpable enough to disoblige the young lady herself, who could not so well distinguish between overstrained courtesy and real good breeding. This behaviour screened him from the suspicion of the family, who considered it as an effort of politeness, to cover his indifference and disgust for the daughter of his friend, who had by this time given some reason to believe she looked upon him with the eyes of affection; so that the opportunities he enjoyed of conversing with her in private, were less liable to intrusion or inquiry. Indeed, from what I have already observed, touching the sentiments of her stepdame, that lady, far from taking measures for thwarting our hero's design, would have rejoiced at the execution of it, and, had she been informed of his intent, might have fallen upon some method to

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facilitate the enterprise; but, as he solely depended upon his own talents, he never dreamed of soliciting such an auxiliary.

Under cover of instructing and accomplishing her in the exercise of music, he could not want occasions for promoting his aim; when, after having soothed her sense of hearing, even to a degree of ravishment, so as to extort from her an exclamation, importing, that he was surely something supernatural! he never failed to whisper some insidious compliment or tale of love, exquisitely suited to the emotions of her soul. Thus was her heart insensibly subdued; though more than half his work was still undone; for, at all times, she disclosed such purity of sentiment, such inviolable attachment to religion and virtue, and seemed so averse to all sorts of inflammatory discourse, that he durst not presume upon the footing he had gained in her affection, to explain the baseness of his desire; he therefore applied to another of her passions, that proved the bane of her virtue. This was her timidity, which at first being constitutional, was afterwards increased by the circumstances of her education, and now aggravated by the artful conversation of Fathom, which he chequered with dismal stories of omens, portents, prophecies, and apparitions, delivered upon such unquestionable testimony, and with such marks of conviction, as captivated the belief of the devoted Celinda, and filled her imagination with unceasing terrors.

In vain she strove to dispel those frightful ideas, and avoid such topics of discourse for the future. The more she endeavoured to banish them, the more

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troublesome they became; and such was her infatuation, that as her terrors increased, her thirst after that sort of knowledge was augmented. Many sleepless nights did she pass amidst those horrors of fancy, starting at every noise, and sweating with dreary apprehension, yet ashamed to own her fears, or solicit the comfort of a bedfellow, lest she should incur the ridicule and censure of her father's wife; and what rendered this disposition the more irksome, was the solitary situation of her chamber, that stood at the end of a long gallery scarce within hearing of any other inhabited part of the house.

All these circumstances had been duly weighed by our projector, who, having prepared Celinda for his purpose, stole at midnight from his apartment, which was in another storey, and approaching her door, there uttered a piteous groan; then softly retired to his bed, in full confidence of seeing next day the effect of this operation. Nor did his arrow miss the mark. Poor Celinda's countenance gave such indications of melancholy and dismay, that he could not omit asking the cause of her disquiet, and she, at his earnest request, was prevailed upon to communicate the dreadful salutation of the preceding night, which she considered as an omen of death to some person of the family, in all probability to herself, as the groan seemed to issue from one corner of her own apartment. Our adventurer argued against this supposition, as contradictory to the common observation of those supernatural warnings which are not usually imparted to the person who is doomed to die, but to some faithful friend, or trusty servant,

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particularly interested in the event. He therefore supposed, that the groans foreboded the death of my lady, who seemed to be in a drooping state of health, and were, by her genius, conveyed to the organs of Celinda, who was the chief sufferer by her jealous and barbarous disposition; he likewise expressed an earnest desire to be an ear-witness of such solemn communication, and, alleging that it was highly improper for a young lady of her delicate feelings to expose herself alone to such another dismal visitation, begged he might be allowed to watch all night in her chamber, in order to defend her from the shocking impressions of fear.

Though no person ever stood more in need of a companion or guard, and her heart throbbed with transports of dismay at the prospect of night, she rejected his proposal with due acknowledgment, and resolved to trust solely to the protection of Heaven. Not that she thought her innocence or reputation could suffer by her compliance with his request; for, hitherto, her heart was a stranger to those young desires which haunt the fancy, and warm the breast of youth; so that, being ignorant of her danger, she saw not the necessity of avoiding temptation; but she refused to admit a man into her bedchamber, merely because it was a step altogether opposite to the forms and decorum of life. Nevertheless, far from being discouraged by this repulse, he knew her fears would multiply and reduce that reluctance, which, in order to weaken, he had recourse to another piece of machinery, that operated powerfully in behalf of his design.

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ANGELIC HARMONY

Some years ago, a twelve-stringed instrument was contrived by a very ingenious musician, by whom it was aptly entitled the "Harp of Æolus," because, being properly applied to a stream of air, it produces a wild irregular variety of harmonious sounds, that seem to be the effect of enchantment, and wonderfully dispose the mind for the most romantic situations. Fathom, who was really a virtuoso in music, had brought one of those new-fashioned guitars into the country, and as the effect of it was still unknown in the family, he that night converted it to the purposes of his amour, by fixing it in the casement of a window belonging to the gallery, exposed to the west wind, which then blew in a gentle breeze. The strings no sooner felt the impression of the balmy zephyr, than they began to pour forth a stream of melody more ravishingly delightful than the song of Philomel, the warbling brook, and all the concert of the wood. The soft and tender notes of peace and love were swelled up with the most delicate and insensible transition into a loud hymn of triumph and exultation, joined by the deep-toned organ, and a full choir of voices, which gradually decayed upon the ear, until it died away in distant sound, as if a flight of angels had raised the song in their ascent to heaven. Yet the chords hardly ceased to vibrate after the expiration of this overture, which ushered in a composition in the same pathetic style; and this again was succeeded by a third, almost without pause or intermission, as if the artist's hand had been indefatigable, and the theme never to be exhausted.

His heart must be quite callous, and his ear lost

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to all distinction, who could hear such harmony without emotion; how deeply, then, must it have affected the delicate Celinda, whose sensations, naturally acute, were whetted to a most painful keenness by her apprehension; who could have no previous idea of such entertainment, and was credulous enough to believe the most improbable tale of superstition! She was overwhelmed with awful terror, and, never doubting that the sounds were more than mortal, recommended herself to the care of Providence in a succession of pious ejaculations.

Our adventurer, having allowed some time for the effect of this contrivance, repaired to her chamber door, and, in a whisper, conveyed through the key-hole, asked if she was awake, begged pardon for such an unseasonable visit, and desired to know her opinion of the strange music which he then heard. In spite of her notions of decency, she was glad of his intrusion, and, being in no condition to observe punctilios, slipped on a wrapper, opened the door, and, with a faltering voice, owned herself frightened almost to distraction. He pretended to console her with reflections, importing, that she was in the hands of a benevolent Being, who would not impose upon his creatures any task which they could not bear; he insisted upon her returning to bed, and assured her he would not stir from her chamber till day. Thus comforted, she betook herself again to rest, while he sat down in an elbow-chair at some distance from the bedside, and, in a soft voice, began the conversation with her on the subject of those visitations from above, which, though undertaken on pretence of

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dissipating her fear and anxiety, was, in reality, calculated for the purpose of augmenting both.

"That sweet air," said he, "seems designed for soothing the bodily anguish of some saint in his last moments. Hark! how it rises into a more sprightly and elevated strain, as if it were an inspiriting invitation to the realms of bliss! Sure, he is now absolved from all the misery of this life! That full and glorious concert of voices and celestial harps betoken his reception among the heavenly choir, who now waft his soul to paradisian joys! This is altogether great, solemn, and amazing! The clock strikes one, the symphony hath ceased!"

This was actually the case; for he had ordered Maurice to remove the instrument at that hour, lest the sound of it should become too familiar, and excite the curiosity of some undaunted domestic, who might frustrate his scheme by discovering the apparatus. As for poor Celinda, her fancy was, by his music and discourse, worked up to the highest pitch of enthusiastic terrors; the whole bed shook with her trepidation, the awful silence that succeeded the supernatural music threw an additional damp upon her spirits, and the artful Fathom affecting to snore at the same time, she could no longer contain her horror, but called upon his name with a fearful accent, and, having owned her present situation insupportable, entreated him to draw near her bedside, that he might be within touch on any emergency.

This was a welcome request to our adventurer, who, asking pardon for his drowsiness, and taking his

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station on the side of her bed, exhorted her to compose herself; then locking her hand fast in his own, was again seized with such an inclination to sleep, that he gradually sunk down by her side, and seemed to enjoy his repose in that attitude. Meanwhile, his tender-hearted mistress, that he might not suffer in his health by his humanity and complaisance, covered him with the counterpane as he slept, and suffered him to take his rest without interruption, till he thought proper to start up suddenly with an exclamation of, "Heaven watch over us!" and then asked, with symptoms of astonishment, if she had heard nothing. Such an abrupt address upon such an occasion, did not fail to amaze and affright the gentle Celinda, who, unable to speak, sprung towards her treacherous protector; and he, catching her in his arms, bade her fear nothing, for he would, at the expense of his life, defend her from all danger.

Having thus, by tampering with her weakness, conquered the first and chief obstacles to his design, he, with great art and perseverance, improved the intercourse to such a degree of intimacy, as could not but be productive of all the consequences which he had foreseen. The groans and music were occasionally repeated, so as to alarm the whole family, and inspire a thousand various conjectures. He failed not to continue his nocturnal visits and ghastly discourse, until his attendance became so necessary to this unhappy maiden, that she durst not stay in her own chamber without his company, nor even sleep, except in contact with her betrayer.

Such a commerce between two such persons of a

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different sex could not possibly be long carried on, without degenerating from the Platonic system of sentimental love. In her paroxysms of dismay, he did not forget to breathe the soft inspirations of his passion, to which she listened with more pleasure, as they diverted the gloomy ideas of her fear; and by this time his extraordinary accomplishments had made a conquest of her heart. What therefore could be a more interesting transition than that from the most uneasy to the most agreeable sensation of the human breast?

This being the case, the reader will not wonder that a consummate traitor, like Fathom, should triumph over the virtue of an artless, innocent young creature, whose passions he had entirely under his command. The gradations towards vice are almost imperceptible, and an experienced seducer can strew them with such enticing and agreeable flowers, as will lead the young sinner on insensibly, even to the most profligate stages of guilt. All therefore that can be done by virtue, unassisted with experience, is to avoid every trial with such a formidable foe, by declining and discouraging the first advances towards a particular correspondence with perfidious man, howsoever agreeable it may seem to be. For here is no security but in conscious weakness.

Fathom, though possessed of the spoils of poor Celinda's honour, did not enjoy his success with tranquillity. Reflection and remorse often invaded her in the midst of their guilty pleasures, and embittered all those moments they had dedicated to mutual bliss. For the seeds of virtue are seldom

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destroyed at once. Even amidst the rank productions of vice, they regerminate to a sort of imperfect vegetation, like some scattered hyacinths shooting up among the weeds of a ruined garden, that testify the former culture and amenity of the soil. She sighed at the sad remembrance of that virgin dignity which she had lost; she wept at the prospect of that disgrace, mortification, and misery she should undergo, when abandoned by this transient lover, and severely reproached him for the arts he had used to shipwreck her innocence and peace.

Such expostulations are extremely unseasonable, when addressed to a man well-nigh sated with the effects of his conquest. They act like strong blasts of wind applied to embers almost extinguished, which, instead of reviving the flame, scatter and destroy every remaining particle of fire. Our adventurer, in the midst of his peculiarities, had inconstancy in common with the rest of his sex. More than half cloyed with the possession of Celinda, he could not fail to be disgusted with her upbraidings; and had she not been the daughter of a gentleman whose friendship he did not think it his interest to forfeit, he would have dropped this correspondence, without reluctance or hesitation. But, as he had measures to keep with a family of such consequence, he constrained his inclinations, so far as to counterfeit those raptures he no longer felt, and found means to appease those intervening tumults of her grief.

Foreseeing, however, that it would not be always in his power to console her on these terms, he resolved, if possible, to divide her affection, which now

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glowed upon him too intensely; and, with that view, whenever she complained of the vapours or dejection, he prescribed, and even insisted upon her swallowing certain cordials of the most palatable composition, without which he never travelled; and these produced such agreeable reveries and flow of spirits, that she gradually became enamoured of intoxication; while he encouraged the pernicious passion, by expressing the most extravagant applause and admiration at the wild irregular sallies it produced. Without having first made this diversion, he would have found it impracticable to leave the house with tranquillity; but, when this bewitching philtre grew into an habit, her attachment to Ferdinand was insensibly dissolved; she began to bear his neglect with indifference, and, sequestering herself from the rest of the family, used to solicit this new ally for consolation.

Having thus put the finishing stroke to the daughter's ruin, he took leave of the father, with many acknowledgments and expressions of gratitude for his hospitality and friendship, and, riding across the country to Bristol, took up his habitation near the hot well, where he stayed during the remaining part of the season. As for the miserable Celinda, she became more and more addicted to the vices in which she had been initiated by his superlative perfidy and craft, until she was quite abandoned by decency and caution. Her father's heart was torn with anguish, while his wife rejoiced in her fall; at length her ideas were quite debased by her infirmity; she grew every day more and more sensual and degenerate, and contracted an intimacy with one of the footmen,

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who was kind enough to take her to wife, in hope of obtaining a good settlement from his master; but, being disappointed in his aim, he conducted her to London, where he made shift to insinuate himself into another service, leaving her to the use, and partly the advantage, of her own person, which was still uncommonly attractive.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

HE REPAIRS TO BRISTOL SPRING, WHERE HE REIGNS PARAMOUNT DURING THE WHOLE SEASON.

WE shall therefore leave her in this comfortable situation, and return to our adventurer, whose appearance at Bristol was considered as a happy omen by the proprietor of the hot well, and all the people who live by the resort of company to that celebrated spring. Nor were they deceived in their prognostic. Fathom, as usual, formed the nucleus or kernel of the beau monde; and the season soon became so crowded, that many people of fashion were obliged to quit the place for want of lodging. Ferdinand was the soul that animated the whole society. He not only invented parties of pleasure, but also, by his personal talents, rendered them more agreeable. In a word, he regulated their diversions, and the master of the ceremonies never would allow the ball to be begun till the Count was seated.

Having thus made himself the object of admiration and esteem, his advice was an oracle, to which they had recourse in all doubtful cases of punctilio or dispute, or even of medicine; for among his other accomplishments, his discourse on that subject was so plausible, and well adapted to the understanding of

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his hearers, that any person who had not actually studied the medical art would have believed he was inspired by the spirit of Æsculapius. What contributed to the aggrandisement of his character in this branch of knowledge, was a victory he obtained over an old physician, who plied at the well, and had one day unfortunately begun to harangue in the pump-room upon the nature of the Bristol water. In the course of this lecture he undertook to account for the warmth of the fluid; and his ideas being perplexed with a great deal of reading, which he had not been able to digest, his disquisition was so indistinct, and his expression so obscure and unentertaining, that our hero seized the opportunity of displaying his own erudition, by venturing to contradict some circumstances of the doctor's hypothesis, and substituting a theory of his own, which, as he had invented it for the purpose, was equally amusing and chimerical.

He alleged, that fire was the sole vivifying principle that pervaded all nature; that, as the heat of the sun concocted the juice of vegetables, and ripened those fruits that grow upon the surface of this globe, there was likewise an immense store of central fire reserved within the bowels of the earth, not only for the generation of gems, fossils, and all the purposes of the mineral world, but likewise for cherishing and keeping alive those plants which would otherwise perish by the winter's cold. The existence of such a fire he proved from the nature of all those volcanoes, which in almost every corner of the earth are continually vomiting up either flames

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or smoke. "These," said he, "are the great vents appointed by nature for the discharge of that rarefied air and combustible matter, which, if confined, would burst the globe asunder; but, besides the larger outlets, there are some small chimneys through which part of the heat transpires; a vapour of that sort, I conceive, must pass through the bed or channel of this spring, the waters of which, accordingly retain a moderate warmth."

This account, which totally overthrew the other's doctrine, was so extremely agreeable to the audience, that the testy doctor lost his temper, and gave them to understand, without preamble, that he must be a person wholly ignorant of natural philosophy, who could invent such a ridiculous system, and they involved in worse than an Egyptian fog, that could not at once discern its weakness and absurdity. This declaration introduced a dispute, which was unanimously determined in favour of our adventurer. On all such occasions the stream of prejudice runs against the physician, even though his antagonist has nothing to recommend himself to the favour of the spectators; and this decision depends upon divers considerations. In the first place, there is a continual war carried on against the learned professions, by all those who, conscious of their own ignorance, seek to level the reputation of their superiors with their own. Secondly, in all disputes upon physic that happen betwixt a person who really understands the art, and an illiterate pretender, the arguments of the first will seem obscure and unintelligible to those who are unacquainted with the previous systems on

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which they are built; while the other's theory, derived from common notions, and superficial observation, will be more agreeable, because better adapted to the comprehension of the hearers. Thirdly, the judgment of the multitude is apt to be biassed by that surprise which is the effect of seeing an artist foiled at his own weapons, by one who engages him only for amusement.

Fathom, besides these advantages, was blessed with a flow of language, an elegant address, a polite and self-denying style of argumentation, together with a temper not to be ruffled; so that the victory could not long waver between him and the physician, to whom he was infinitely superior in every acquisition but that of solid learning, of which the judges had no idea. This contest was not only glorious but profitable to our adventurer, who grew into such request in his medical capacity, that the poor doctor was utterly deserted by his patients, and Fathom's advice solicited by every valetudinarian in the place; nor did he forfeit the character he thus acquired by any miscarriages in his practice. Being but little conversant with the materia medica, the circle of his prescriptions was very small; his chief study was to avoid all drugs of rough operation and uncertain effect, and to administer such only as should be agreeable to the palate, without doing violence to the constitution. Such a physician could not but be agreeable to people of all dispositions; and, as most of the patients were in some shape hypochondriac, the power of imagination, co-operating with his remedies, often effected a cure.

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FRUIT OF HIS SUCCESS

On the whole, it became the fashion to consult the Count in all distempers, and his reputation would have had its run, though the death of every patient had given the lie to his pretensions. But empty fame was not the sole fruit of his success. Though no person would presume to affront this noble graduate with a fee, they did not fail to manifest their gratitude by some more valuable present. Every day some superb piece of china, curious snuff-box, or jewel, was pressed upon him; so that, at the end of the season, he could almost have furnished a toyshop with the acknowledgments he had received. Not only his avarice, but his pleasure, was gratified in the course of his medical administration. He enjoyed free access, egress, and regress with all the females at the well, and no matron scrupled to put her daughter under his care and direction. These opportunities could not be lost upon a man of his intriguing genius; though he conducted his amours with such discretion, that, during the whole season, no lady's character suffered on his account, yet he was highly fortunate in his addresses, and we may venture to affirm, that the reproach of barrenness was more than once removed by the vigour of his endeavours.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

HE IS SMITTEN WITH THE CHARMS OF A FEMALE ADVENTURER, WHOSE ALLUREMENTS SUBJECT HIM TO A NEW VICISSITUDE OF FORTUNE.

AMONG those who were distinguished by his gallantry was the young wife of an old citizen of London, who had granted her permission to reside at the hot well for the benefit of her health, under the eye and inspection of his own sister, who was a maiden of fifty years. The pupil, whose name was Mrs. Trapwell, though low in stature, was finely shaped, her countenance engaging, though her complexion was brown, her hair in colour rivalled the raven's back, and her eyes emulated the lustre of the diamond. Fathom had been struck with her first appearance; but found it impracticable to elude the vigilance of her duenna, so as to make a declaration of his flame; until she herself, guessing the situation of his thoughts, and not displeased with the discovery, thought proper to furnish him with the opportunity he wanted, by counterfeiting an indisposition, for the cure of which she knew his advice would be implored. This was the beginning of an acquaintance, which was soon improved to his wish; and so well did she manage her attractions, as in some measure to fix the incon-

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stancy of his disposition; for, at the end of the season, his passion was not sated; and they concerted the means of continuing their commerce, even after their return to London.

This intercourse effectually answered the purpose of the husband, who had been decoyed into matrimony by the cunning of his spouse, whom he had privately kept as a concubine before marriage. Conscious of her own precarious situation, she had resolved to impose upon the infirmities of Trapwell, and, feigning herself pregnant, gave him to understand she could no longer conceal her condition from the knowledge of her brother, who was an officer in the army, and of such violent passions, that, should he once discover her backsliding, he would undoubtedly wipe away the stains of his family dishonour with her own blood, as well as that of her keeper. The citizen, to prevent such a catastrophe, took her to wife; but soon after perceiving the trick which had been played upon him, set his invention at work, and at length contrived a scheme which he thought would enable him, not only to retrieve his liberty, but also indemnify himself for the mortification he had undergone.

Far from creating any domestic disturbance, by upbraiding her with her finesse, he seemed perfectly well pleased with his acquisition; and, as he knew her void of any principle, and extremely addicted to pleasure, he chose proper occasions to insinuate, that she might gratify her own inclination, and at the same time turn her beauty to good account. She joyfully listened to these remonstrances, and, in

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consequence of their mutual agreement, she repaired to Bristol Spring, on pretence of an ill state of health, accompanied by her sister-in-law, whom they did not think proper to intrust with the real motive of her journey. Fathom's person was agreeable, and his finances supposed to be in flourishing order; therefore, she selected him from the herd of gallants, as a proper sacrifice to the powers which she adored; and, on her arrival in London, made her husband acquainted with the importance of her conquest.

Trapwell overwhelmed her with caresses and praise for her discreet and dutiful conduct, and faithfully promised that she should pocket in her own privy purse one-half of the spoils that should be gathered from her gallant, whom she therefore undertook to betray, after he had swore, in the most solemn manner, that his intention was not to bring the affair to a public trial, which would redound to his own disgrace, but to extort a round sum of money from the Count, by way of composition. Confiding in this protestation, she in a few days gave him intelligence of an assignation she had made with our adventurer, at a certain bagnio near Covent Garden; upon which he secured the assistance of a particular friend and his own journeyman, with whom, and a constable, he repaired to the place of rendezvous, where he waited in an adjoining room, according to the directions of his virtuous spouse, until she made the preconcerted signal of hemming three times aloud, when he and his associates rushed into the chamber and surprised our hero in bed with his inamorato.

The lady on this occasion acted her part to a

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miracle; she screamed at their approach; and, after an exclamation of "Ruined and undone!" fainted away in the arms of her spouse, who had by this time seized her by the shoulders, and begun to upbraid her with her infidelity and guilt. As for Fathom, his affliction was unutterable, when he found himself discovered in that situation, and made prisoner by the two assistants, who had pinioned him in such a manner, that he could not stir, much less accomplish an escape. All his ingenuity and presence of mind seemed to forsake him in this emergency. The horrors of an English jury overspread his imagination; for he at once perceived that the toil into which he had fallen was laid for the purpose; consequently he took it for granted that there would be no deficiency in point of evidence. Soon as he recollected himself, he begged that no violence might be offered to his person, and entreated the husband to favour him with a conference, in which the affair might be compromised, without prejudice to the reputation of either.

At first Trapwell breathed nothing but implacable revenge, but, by the persuasion of his friends, after he had sent home his wife in a chair, he was prevailed upon to hear the proposals of the delinquent, who having assured him, by way of apology, that he had always believed the lady was a widow, made him an offer of five hundred pounds, as an atonement for the injury he had sustained. This being a sum no ways adequate to the expectation of the citizen, who looked upon the Count as possessor of an immense estate, he rejected the terms with disdain, and made instant application to a judge, from whom he

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obtained a warrant for securing his person till the day of trial. Indeed, in this case, money was but a secondary consideration with Trapwell, whose chief aim was to be legally divorced from a woman he detested. Therefore there was no remedy for the unhappy Count, who in vain offered to double the sum. He found himself reduced to the bitter alternative of procuring immediate bail, or going directly to Newgate.

In this dilemma he sent a messenger to his friend Ratchcali, whose countenance fell when he understood the Count's condition; nor would he open his mouth in the style of consolation, until he had consulted a certain solicitor of his acquaintance, who assured him the law abounded with such resources as would infallibly screen the defendant, had the fact been still more palpable than it was. He said there was great presumption to believe the Count had fallen a sacrifice to a conspiracy, which by some means or other would be detected; and, in that case, the plaintiff might obtain one shilling in lieu of damages. If that dependence should fail, he hinted that, in all probability, the witnesses were not incorruptible; or, should they prove to be so, one man's oath was as good as another's; and, thank Heaven, there was no dearth of evidence, provided money could be found to answer the necessary occasions.

Ratchcali, comforted by these insinuations, and dreading the resentment of our adventurer, who, in his despair, might punish him severely for his want of friendship, by some precipitate explanation of the commerce they had carried on; moved, I say, by these

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considerations, and moreover tempted with the prospect of continuing to reap the advantages resulting from their conjunction, he and another person of credit with whom he largely dealt in jewels, condescended to become sureties for the appearance of Fathom, who was accordingly admitted to bail. Not but that the Tyrolese knew Ferdinand too well to confide in his parole. He depended chiefly upon his ideas of self-interest, which, he thought, would persuade him to risk the uncertain issue of a trial, rather than quit the field before the harvest was half over; and he was resolved to make his own retreat without ceremony, should our hero be unwise enough to abandon his bail.

Such an adventure could not long lie concealed from the notice of the public, even if both parties had been at pains to suppress the circumstances. But the plaintiff, far from seeking to cover, affected to complain loudly of his misfortune, that he might interest his neighbours in his behalf, and raise a spirit of rancour and animosity, to influence the jury against this insolent foreigner, who had come over into England to debauch our wives and deflower our daughters; while he employed a formidable band of lawyers to support the indictment, which he laid at ten thousand pounds damages.

Meanwhile, Fathom and his associate did not fail to take all proper measures for his defence; they retained a powerful bar of counsel, and the solicitor was supplied with one hundred pounds after another, to answer the expense of secret service; still assuring his clients that everything was in an excellent

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train, and that his adversary would gain nothing but shame and confusion of face. Nevertheless, there was a necessity for postponing the trial, on account of a material evidence, who, though he wavered, was not yet quite brought over; and the attorney found means to put off the decision from term to term, until there was no quibble left for further delay. While this suit was depending, our hero continued to move in his usual sphere; nor did the report of his situation at all operate to his disadvantage in the polite world; on the contrary, it added a fresh plume to his character, in the eyes of all those who were not before acquainted with the triumphs of his gallantry. Notwithstanding this countenance of his friends, he himself considered the affair in a very serious light; and perceiving that, at any rate, he must be a considerable loser, he resolved to double his assiduity in trade, that he might be the more able to afford the extraordinary expense to which he was subjected.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN

FRESH CAUSE FOR EXERTING HIS EQUANIMITY AND FORTITUDE.

THE reader may have observed, that Fathom, with all his circumspection, had a weak side, which exposed him to sundry mischances; this was his covetousness, which on some occasions became too hard for his discretion. At this period of time it was, by the circumstances of his situation, inflamed to a degree of rapacity. He was now prevailed upon to take a hand at whist or piquet, and even to wield the hazard-box; though he had hitherto declared himself an irreconcilable enemy to all sorts of play; and so uncommon was his success and dexterity at these exercises, as to surprise his acquaintance, and arouse the suspicion of some people, who repined at his prosperity.

But in nothing was his conduct more inexcusable than in giving way to the dangerous temerity of Ratchcali, which he had been always at pains to restrain, and permitting him to practise the same fraud upon an English nobleman, which had been executed upon himself at Frankfort. In other words, the Tyrolese, by the canal of Ferdinand's finger and recommendation, sold a pebble for a real brilliant, and

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in a few days the cheat was discovered, to the infinite confusion of our adventurer, who nevertheless assumed the guise of innocence with so much art, and expressed such indignation against the villain who had imposed upon his judgment and unsuspecting generosity, that his lordship acquitted him of any share in the deceit, and contented himself with the restitution, which he insisted upon making out of his own pocket, until he should be able to apprehend the rogue, who had thought proper to abscond for his own safety. In spite of all this exculpation, his character did not fail to retain a sort of stigma, which indeed the plainest proofs of innocence are hardly able to efface; and his connexion with such a palpable knave as the Tyrolese appeared to be, had an effect to his prejudice in the minds of all those who were privy to the occurrence.

When a man's reputation is once brought in question, every trifle is, by the malevolence of mankind, magnified into a strong presumption against the culprit. A few whispers communicated by the envious mouth of slander, which he can have no opportunity to answer and refute, shall, in the opinion of the world, convict him of the most horrid crimes; and for one hypocrite who is decked with the honours of virtue, there are twenty good men who suffer the ignominy of vice; so well disposed are individuals to trample upon the fame of their fellow-creatures. If the most unblemished merit is not protected from this injustice, it will not be wondered at that no quarter was given to the character of an adventurer like Fathom, who, among other unlucky occurrences, had

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the misfortune to be recognised about this time by his two Parisian friends, Sir Stentor Stile and Sir Giles Squirrel.

These worthy knights-errant had returned to their own country, after having made a very prosperous campaign in France, at the end of which, however, they very narrowly escaped the galleys; and seeing the Polish Count seated at the head of taste and politeness, they immediately circulated the story of his defeat at Paris, with many ludicrous circumstances of their own invention, and did not scruple to affirm that he was a rank impostor. When the laugh is raised upon a great man, he never fails to dwindle into contempt. Ferdinand began to perceive a change in the countenance of his friends. His company was no longer solicited with that eagerness which they had formerly expressed in his behalf. Even his entertainments were neglected; when he appeared at any private or public assembly, the ladies, instead of glowing with pleasure, as formerly, now tittered or regarded him with looks of disdain; and a certain pert, little, forward coquette, with a view to put him out of countenance, by raising the laugh at his expense, asked him one night, at a drum, when he had heard from his relations in Poland? She succeeded in her design upon the mirth of the audience, but was disappointed in the other part of her aim; for our hero replied, without the least mark of discomposure, "They are all in good health at your service, madam; I wish I knew in what part of the world your relations reside, that I might return the compliment." By this answer, which was the more

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severe, as the young lady was of very doubtful extraction, he retorted the laugh upon the aggressor, though he likewise failed in his attempt upon her temper; for she was perhaps the only person present who equalled himself in stability of countenance.

Notwithstanding this appearance of unconcern, he was deeply touched with these marks of alienation in the behaviour of his friends, and, foreseeing in his own disgrace the total shipwreck of his fortune, he entered into a melancholy deliberation with himself about the means of retrieving his importance in the beau monde, or of turning his address into some other channel, where he could stand upon a less slippery foundation. In this exercise of his thoughts, no scheme occurred more feasible than that of securing the booty he had made, and retiring with his associate, who was also blown, into some other country, where their names and characters being unknown, they might pursue their old plan of commerce without molestation. He imparted this suggestion to the Tyrolese, who approved the proposal of decamping, though he combated with all his might our hero's inclination to withdraw himself before the trial, by repeating the assurances of the solicitor, who told him he might depend upon being reimbursed by the sentence of the court for great part of the sums he had expended in the course of the prosecution.

Fathom suffered himself to be persuaded by these arguments, supported with the desire of making an honourable retreat, and, waiting patiently for the day of trouble, discharged his sureties, by a personal appearance in court. Yet this was not the only score

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he discharged that morning; the solicitor presented his own bill before they set out for Westminster Hall, and gave the Count to understand that it was the custom, from time immemorial, for the client to clear with his attorney before trial. Ferdinand had nothing to object against this established rule, though he looked upon it as a bad omen, in spite of all the solicitor's confidence and protestations; and he was not a little confounded, when, looking into the contents, he found himself charged with 350 attendances. He knew it was not his interest to disoblige his lawyer at such a juncture; nevertheless, he could not help expostulating with him on this article, which seemed to be so falsely stated with regard to the number; when his questions drew on an explanation, by which he found he had incurred the penalty of three shillings and fourpence for every time he chanced to meet the conscientious attorney, either in the park, the coffee-house, or the street, provided they had exchanged the common salutation; and he had good reason to believe the solicitor had often thrown himself in his way, with a view to swell this item of his account.

With this extortion our adventurer was fain to comply, because he lay at the mercy of the caitiff; accordingly, he with a good grace paid the demand, which, including his former disbursements, amounted to three hundred and sixty-five pounds eleven shillings and threepence three farthings, and then presenting himself before the judge, quietly submitted to the laws of the realm. His counsel behaved like men of consummate abilities in their profession;

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they exerted themselves with equal industry, eloquence, and erudition, in their endeavours to perplex the truth, browbeat the evidence, puzzle the judge, and mislead the jury; but the defendant found himself wofully disappointed in the deposition of Trapwell's journeyman, whom the solicitor pretended to have converted to his interest. This witness, as the attorney afterwards declared, played booty, and the facts came out so clear, that Ferdinand Count Fathom was convicted of criminal conversation with the plaintiff's wife, and cast in fifteen hundred pounds, under the denomination of damages.

He was not so much surprised as afflicted at this decision, because he saw it gradually approaching from the examination of the first evidence. His thoughts were now employed in casting about for some method of deliverance from the snare in which he found himself entangled. To escape, he foresaw it would be impracticable, as Trapwell would undoubtedly be prepared for arresting him before he could quit Westminster Hall; he was too well acquainted with Ratchcali's principles, to expect any assistance from that quarter in money matters; and he was utterly averse to the payment of the sum awarded against him, which would have exhausted his whole fortune. He therefore resolved to try the friendship of some persons of fashion, with whom he had maintained an intimacy of correspondence. Should they fail him in the day of his necessity, he proposed to have recourse to his former sureties, one of whom he meant to bilk, while the other might accompany him in his retreat; or, should both these expedients mis-

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carry, he determined, rather than part with his effects, to undergo the most disagreeable confinement, in hope of obtaining the jailor's connivance at his escape.

These resolutions being taken, he met his fate with great fortitude and equanimity, and calmly suffered himself to be conveyed to the house of a sheriff's officer, who, as he made his exit from the hall, according to his own expectation, executed a writ against him, at the suit of Trapwell, for a debt of two thousand pounds. To this place he was followed by his solicitor, who was allured by the prospect of another job, and who, with great demonstrations of satisfaction, congratulated him upon the happy issue of the trial; arrogating to himself the merit of having saved him eight thousand pounds in the article of damages, by the previous steps he had taken, and the noble defence that he and his friends the counsel had made for their client; he even hinted an expectation of receiving a gratuity for his extraordinary care and discretion.

Fathom, galled as he was with his misfortune, and enraged at the effrontery of this pettifogger, maintained a serenity of countenance, and sent the attorney with a message to the plaintiff, importing, that, as he was a foreigner, and could not be supposed to have so much cash about him, as to spare fifteen hundred pounds from the funds of his ordinary expense, he would grant him a bond payable in two months, during which period he should be able to procure a proper remittance from his own estate. While the solicitor was employed in this negotiation, he

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despatched his valet-de-chambre to one nobleman, and Maurice to another, with billets, signifying the nature of the verdict which his adversary had obtained, and desiring that each would lend him a thousand pounds upon his parole, until he could negotiate bills upon the Continent.

His three messengers returned almost at the same instant of time, and these were the answers they brought back.

Trapwell absolutely rejected his personal security; and threatened him with all the horrors of a jail, unless he would immediately discharge the debt, or procure sufficient bondsmen; and one of his quality friends favoured him with this reply to his request: —

"My dear Count! — I am mortally chagrined at the triumph you have furnished to that rascally citizen. By the lard! the judge must have been in the terrors of cuckoldom, to influence the decision; and the jury a mere herd of horned beasts, to bring in such a barbarous verdict. Egad! at this rate, no gentleman will be able to lie with another man's wife, but at the risk of a cursed prosecution. But to waive this disagreeable circumstance, which you must strive to forget; I declare my mortification is still the greater, because I cannot at present supply you with the trifle your present exigency requires; for, to tell you a secret, my own finances are in damnable confusion. But a man of Count Fathom's figure and address can never be puzzled for the want of such a paltry sum. Adieu, my dear Count! we shall, I suppose, have the pleasure of seeing you to-morrow at White's: meanwhile, I have the honour to be, with the most perfect attachment, yours,

"Grizzlegrin."

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The other noble peer, to whom he addressed himself on this occasion, cherished the same sentiments of virtue, friendship, and generosity; but his expression was so different, that we shall, for the edification of the reader, transcribe his letter in his own words: —

"Sir, — I was never more astonished than at the receipt of your very extraordinary billet, wherein you solicit the loan of a thousand pounds, which you desire may be sent with the bearer on the faith of your parole. Sir, I have no money to send you or lend you; and cannot help repeating my expressions of surprise at your confidence in making such a strange and unwarranted demand. 'T is true, I may have made professions of friendship, while I looked upon you as a person of honour and good morals; but now that you are convicted of such a flagrant violation of the laws of that kingdom where you have been treated with such hospitality and respect, I think myself fully absolved from any such conditional promise, which indeed is never interpreted into any other than a bare compliment. I am sorry you have involved your character and fortune in such a disagreeable affair, and am, Sir, yours, etc.

"Trompington."

Ferdinand was not such a novice in the world as to be disappointed at these repulses; especially as he had laid very little stress upon the application, which was made by way of an experiment upon the gratitude or caprice of those two noblemen, whom he had actually more than once obliged with the same sort of assistance which he now solicited, though not to such a considerable amount.

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Having nothing further to expect from the fashionable world, he sent the Tyrolese to the person who had been bail for his appearance, with full instructions to explain his present occasion in the most favourable light, and desire he would reinforce the credit of the Count with his security; but that gentleman, though he placed the most perfect confidence on the honour of our hero, and would have willingly entered into bonds again for his personal appearance, was not quite so well satisfied of his circumstances, as to become liable for the payment of two thousand pounds, an expense which, in his opinion, the finances of no foreign Count were able to defray. He therefore lent a deaf ear to the most pressing remonstrances of the ambassador, who had recourse to several other merchants, with the same bad success; so that the prisoner, despairing of bail, endeavoured to persuade Ratchcali, that it would be his interest to contribute a thousand pounds towards his discharge, that he might be enabled to quit England with a good grace, and execute his part of the plan they had projected.

So powerful was his eloquence on the occasion, and such strength of argument did he use, that even the Tyrolese seemed convinced, though reluctantly, and agreed to advance the necessary sum upon the bond and judgment of our adventurer, who, being disabled from transacting his own affairs in person, was obliged to intrust Ratchcali with his keys, papers, and power of attorney, under the check and inspection of his faithful Maurice and the solicitor, whose fidelity he bespoke with the promise of an ample recompense.

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CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

THE BITER IS BIT.

YET, he had no sooner committed his effects to the care of this triumvirate, than his fancy was visited with direful warnings, which produced cold sweats and palpitations, and threw him into such agonies of apprehension as he had never known before. He remembered the former desertion of the Tyrolese, the recent villany of the solicitor, and recollected the remarks he had made upon the disposition and character of his valet, which evinced him a fit companion for the other two.

Alarmed at these reflections, he entreated the bailiff to indulge him with a visit to his own lodgings, and even offered one hundred guineas as a gratification for his compliance. But the officer, who had formerly lost a considerable sum by the escape of a prisoner, would not run any risk in an affair of such consequence, and our hero was obliged to submit to the tortures of his own presaging fears. After he had waited five hours in the most racking impatience, he saw the attorney enter with all the marks of hurry, fatigue, and consternation, and heard him exclaim, "Good God, have you seen the gentleman?"

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Fathom found his fears realised in this interrogation, to which he answered in a tone of horror and dismay, "What gentleman? I suppose I am robbed. Speak, and keep me no longer in suspense." "Robbed!" cried the attorney, "the Lord forbid! I hope you can depend upon the person you empowered to receive your jewels and cash? I must own his proceedings are a little extraordinary; for after he had rummaged your scrutoire, from which, in presence of me and your servant, he took one hundred and fifty guineas, a parcel of diamond rings and buckles, according to this here inventory, which I wrote with my own hand, and East India bonds to the tune of five hundred more, we adjourned to Garraway's, where he left me alone, under pretence of going to a broker of his acquaintance who lived in the neighbourhood, while the valet, as I imagined, waited for us in the alley. Well, sir, he stayed so long, that I began to be uneasy, and at length resolved to send the servant in quest of him, but when I went out for that purpose, deuce a servant was to be found; though I in person inquired for him at every alehouse within half a mile of the place. I then despatched no less than five ticket porters upon the scent after them, and I myself, by a direction from the bar-keeper, went to Signior Ratchcali's lodgings, where, as they told me, he had not been seen since nine o'clock in the morning. Upon this intimation, I came directly hither, to give you timely notice, that you may without delay take measures for your own security. The best thing you can do, is to take out writs for

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apprehending him, in the counties of Middlesex, Surrey, Kent, and Essex, and I shall put them in the hands of trusty and diligent officers, who will soon ferret him out of his lurking-place, provided he skulks within ten miles of the bills of mortality. To be sure, the job will be expensive; and all these runners must be paid beforehand. But what then? the defendant is worth powder, and if we can once secure him, I'll warrant the prosecution will quit cost."

Fathom was almost choked with concern and resentment at the news of this mischance, so that he could not utter one word until this narrative was finished. Nor was his suspicion confined to the Tyrolese and his own lacquey; he considered the solicitor as their accomplice and director, and was so much provoked at the latter part of his harangue, that his discretion seemed to vanish, and, collaring the attorney, "Villain!" said he, "you yourself have been a principal actor in this robbery." Then turning to the bystanders, "and I desire in the King's name that he may be secured, until I can make oath before a magistrate in support of the charge. If you refuse your assistance in detaining him, I will make immediate application to one of the secretaries of state, who is my particular friend, and he will see justice done to all parties."

At mention of this formidable name, the bailiff and his whole family were in commotion, to obstruct the retreat of the lawyer, who stood aghast and trembled under the grasp of our adventurer. But, soon as he found himself delivered from this embrace,

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by the interposition of the spectators, and collected his spirits, which had been suddenly dissipated by Fathom's unexpected assault, he began to display one art of his occupation, which he always reserved for extraordinary occasions. This was the talent of abuse, which he poured forth with such fluency of opprobrious language, that our hero, smarting as he was, and almost desperate with his loss, deviated from that temperance of behaviour which he had hitherto preserved, and snatching up the poker, with one stroke opened a deep trench upon the attorney's skull, that extended from the hind head almost to the upper part of the nose, upon each side of which it discharged a sanguine stream. Notwithstanding the pain of this application, the solicitor was transported with joy at the sense of the smart, and inwardly congratulated himself upon the appearance of his own blood, which he no sooner perceived, than he exclaimed, "I'm a dead man," and fell upon the floor at full length.

Immediate recourse was had to a surgeon in the neighbourhood, who, having examined the wound, declared there was a dangerous depression of the first table of the skull, and that, if he could save the patient's life without the application of the trepan, it would be one of the greatest cures that ever were performed. By this time, Fathom's first transport being overblown, he summoned up his whole resolution, and reflected upon his own ruin with that fortitude which had never failed him in the emergencies of his fate. Little disturbed at the prognostic of the surgeon, which he considered in the right point of

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view; "Sir," said he, "I am not so unacquainted with the resistance of an attorney's skull, as to believe the chastisement I have bestowed on him will at all endanger his life, which is in much greater jeopardy from the hands of the common executioner. For, notwithstanding this accident, I am determined to prosecute the rascal for robbery with the utmost severity of the law; and, that I may have a sufficient fund left for that prosecution, I shall not at present throw away one farthing in unnecessary expense, but insist upon being conveyed to prison without farther delay."

This declaration was equally unwelcome to the bailiff, surgeon, and solicitor, who, upon the supposition that the Count was a person of fortune, and would rather part with an immense sum than incur the ignominy of a jail, or involve himself in another disgraceful lawsuit, had resolved to fleece him to the utmost of their power. But, now the attorney finding him determined to set his fate at defiance, and to retort upon him a prosecution, which he had no design to undergo, began to repent heartily of the provocation he had given, and to think seriously on some method to overcome the obstinacy of the incensed foreigner. With this view, while the bailiff conducted him to bed in another apartment, he desired the catchpole to act the part of mediator between him and the Count, and furnished him with proper instructions for that purpose. Accordingly the landlord, on his return, told Fathom that he was sure the solicitor was not a man for this world; for that he had left him deprived of his senses, and pray-

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ing to God with great devotion for mercy to his murderer. He then exhorted him, with many protestations of friendship, to compromise the unhappy affair by exchanging releases with the attorney before his delirium should be known, otherwise he would bring himself into a most dangerous premunire, whether the plaintiff should die of his wound, or live to prosecute him for assault. "And with regard to your charge of robbery against him," said he, "as it is no more than a base suspicion, unsupported by the least shadow of evidence, the bill would be thrown out, and then he might sue you for damages. I therefore, out of pure friendship and good-nature, advise you to compromise the affair, and, if you think proper, will endeavour to bring about a mutual release."

Our hero, whose passion was by this time pretty well cooled, saw reason for assenting to the proposal; upon which the deed was immediately executed, the mediator's bill was discharged, and Ferdinand conveyed in an hackney-coach to prison, after he had empowered his own landlord to discharge his servants, and convert his effects into ready money. Thus, he saw himself, in the course of a few hours, deprived of his reputation, rank, liberty, and friends; and his fortune reduced from two thousand pounds to something less than two hundred, fifty of which he had carried to jail in his pocket.

END OF VOL. I.

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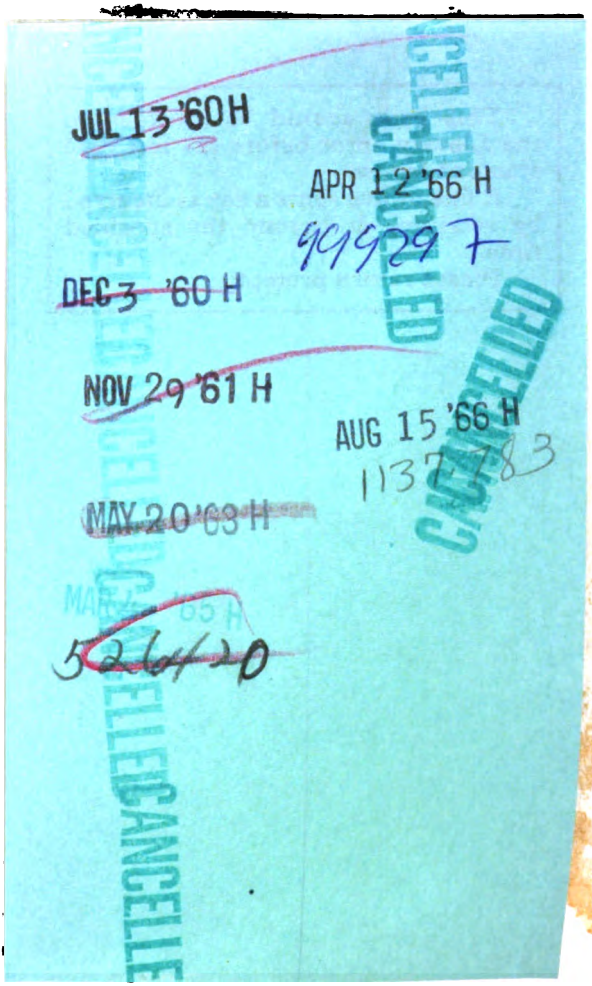

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